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JOHN DUNTON'S LETTERS
FROM NEW ENGLAND

BY
CHESTER NOYES GREENOUGH



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JOHN DUNTON'S LETTERS FROM NEW ENGLAND

Even though the historical literature of New England were far richer than it is in such diaries as those of Samuel Sewall and Cotton Mather and in such observations as those of Lechford and Josselyn, there would still be an honorable place for such a document as we apparently have in John Dunton's *Letters from New England*. Nothing could be more welcome than the record of a London bookseller who spent five months in Boston in the critical year 1686, whose point of view is that of a friendly outsider, whose acquaintance included not merely the clergy and the magistrates but many other types as well, whose observation comprehended Indians, adventurers, tavern-keepers, picnics, sermons, and executions, and whose portraits of people are perhaps more numerous, as they certainly are more vivid, than those of almost any other writer of that time and place. The wonder would seem to be that more extensive use has not been made of a record of which the date, contents, and point of view lead us to expect so much. Not that Dunton has been wholly neglected: many historians ¹ have made use of him, and one or two ² have praised in the highest terms the truthfulness and insight of his portraits. These portraits do, indeed, deserve our close attention.

¹ Among others, Palfrey, *History of New England*, iii. 60 n, 69 n, 487 n; Sibley, *Harvard Graduates*, ii. 17, 130, 240, 266, 280, 304; Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, ii. 199, 413 n, 433, 495, 500, iv. 531; G. E. Littlefield, *Early Boston Booksellers*, pp. 139-143; S. G. Drake, *History and Antiquities of Boston*, 1856, pp. 459-467, 472 note, 595 and note.

² "In the description of the Boston old maid — which must be taken entire if we would comprehend its truthfulness and its characteristic revelation of the time — the gay traveller [Dunton] records what he saw" (W. B. Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England*, i. 299-300). This particular portrait, of which we shall say more later, may be found in the *Letters from New England*, pp. 98-102, or in the *Life and Errors*, i. 102-103.

Whitmore (*Introduction to the Letters*, p. xxiv, Boston, Prince Society, 1867) regards these letters "as unique sketches of New-England life, honestly drawn, and defective rather than erroneous." Whitmore also (p. xviii) thinks that "the portraits of Mrs. Breck, Mrs. Green, and Comfort Wilkins, are descriptions of such Puritans as we may be proud to claim for Massachusetts."

Throughout this article references to Dunton's *Letters from New England* are to Whitmore's edition made for the Prince Society, and — unless the contrary is stated — references to Dunton's *Life and Errors* are to J. B. Nichols's edition, in two volumes, London, 1818.

But first let us see who Dunton was and how he came to write about New England.

John Dunton¹ was born on May 4-14, 1659. His father, previously Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and then rector of Graffham in Huntingdonshire, was the third John Dunton in succession to be a minister. Our John Dunton, unable to keep up this tradition, was apprenticed, when between fourteen and fifteen years old, to Thomas Parkhurst, the London bookseller, who was later to bring out Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*. Dunton's apprenticeship seems not to have been wholly industrious. When it ceased, apparently in 1681, he commenced bookseller on his own account. His first publication was entered in Michaelmas Term of 1681.² Many others followed, one of them a collection of funeral sermons, *The House of Weeping*, 1682, by his father. On August 3, 1682, he married Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel Annesley, D.D. For a while "prosperity and success were the common course of Providence,"³ but presently "there came a universal damp upon Trade,"³ and Dunton, having £500 due him in New England, decided to "ramble" thither.

In November,⁴ 1685, accordingly, in the ship *Susannah* and Thomas, Captain Thomas Jenner, he set sail from the Downs for Boston. After a very long and unpleasant voyage, in the course of which he either saw or just missed seeing an amazing variety of fishes and marine animals — including an alligator⁵ — Dunton reached Boston. The

¹ The sketches of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in John Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, v. 59-83, in John Bowyer Nichols's introduction to the 1818 edition of the *Life and Errors*, in Whitmore's introduction to the *Letters from New England*, and elsewhere, all rest upon Dunton's own account in the *Life and Errors*, first published in 1705.

² Arber, *Term Catalogues*, i. 458.

³ *Life and Errors*, vol. i. p. 79.

⁴ In the *Life and Errors* (i. 87) Dunton gives the date November 2; in the *Letters from New England* (p. 16) he has it November 20. But Sewall (*Diary for January 28, 1686*) records that "Jenner came from Ile Wight the 13, of November" (5 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 119). Dunton says (*Letters*, p. 22), "It was on Friday, the 29th October, we began to sail from the Isle of Wight." It happens that in 1685 the 29th of October fell on Thursday.

⁵ "Being laid down upon the Bed one Day to repose my self, Palmer [Dunton's apprentice and servant] comes down to me, and tells me, I had lost the sight of a very great and strange Creature, which our Captain call'd an Alligator; this Creature is of a vast length and breadth, (some say many yards in length:) in colour he is of a dark brown, which makes him the more imperceptable when he

date of his arrival has been variously stated. Whitmore¹ puts it "within a day or two of February 10," 1686. Palfrey,² probably following John Nichols,³ puts it in March. John Bowyer Nichols⁴ prefers February. We have, to be sure, Dunton's own word that he was at sea "above four months."⁵ But as for that, we have also Dunton's word⁶ that he spent ten months in New England, although he declares that he sailed for home on July 5, 1686,⁷ — an assertion wholly irreconcilable with the statement that he set sail on either November 2 or November 20, and spent four months at sea.

The true date appears as soon as we examine Sewall's Diary. For we know from Dunton⁸ that he sailed with Captain Thomas Jenner, and we have, furthermore, a rather explicit account⁹ of his arrival at Boston. "We . . . Landed near the Castle, within a mile of Boston, where we lay that Night; . . . Having refresh'd our selves the first Night at the Castle, where . . . we were very civilly treated by the Governour,¹⁰ the next morning we bent our Course for Boston; . . . over the Ice." Sewall's account, although it makes no mention of John Dunton, agrees in all these circumstances and also supplies the date:¹¹

lies as a Trapan in the Waters. He is of so vast a strength that no Creature is able to make his Escape from him, if he gets but his Chaps fastened in them; for he has three Tere of Teeth in his Chaps and so firmly sealed and armed with Coat of Male, that you may as well shoot at a Rock, or strike against Bars of Iron, as offer to wound him" (Letters, p. 35).

¹ Introduction to Letters, pp. xi, xxii.

² History of New England, iii. 487 note 2.

³ Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, v. 63.

⁴ Life and Errors, vol. i. p. xi.

⁵ Life and Errors, i. 89. In the Letters (p. 49) he says "almost four months." Compare note 7, below. This is disproved by the fact (see p. 216 and note 2) that on February 16, 1686, Dunton was given the freedom of Boston and signed his name to the record.

⁶ Letters, p. 69.

⁷ "I came from Boston on the Fifth of July and was in London on the fifth of August; which was three months shorter than my passage thither" (Letters, p. 302).

⁸ Letters, p. 26; Life and Errors, i. 86, 88.

⁹ Letters, pp. 53-54; Life and Errors, i. 89-90.

¹⁰ Capt. Roger Clap, Governor of the Castle.

¹¹ On account of the critical state of affairs in England and their bearing on the matter of the charter, the arrival of a ship was just then an event of even more consequence than usual. It is not unlikely that Captain Jenner was particularly expected, for we know that just one year before, on January 28, 1685, "at the

Wednesday, Jan^r 27. [1686] . . . Is talk of a Ship below and some think it may be Jenner from London.

Thorsday, January 28, Mr. Jenner having lodged at Capt. Clap's last night, with Mr. Belcher and others, come near twenty together to Serj^t Bull's over the Ice and bring the News of the Rose Frigot ready to come and bring Mr. Randolph, who is to be Deputy Governour, and Mr. Dudley Governour. . . . The Town much filled with this discourse. . . . When Mr. Jenner came in the Magistrates went all off the Bench to hear his News in the Lobby.¹

It is entirely clear, therefore, that John Dunton arrived in Boston Harbor on the evening of January 27, 1686, and reached the city on the following day. Dunton's own chronology is so shaky that it is a satisfaction to be able to fix this date by evidence from a trustworthy source.

On February 16, 1686, Dunton was made a freeman of Boston,² and about the same time he opened his bookshop at Mr. Richard Wil-

opening of this Court the Gouverno^r declar'd it, y^t on the certeine or generall rumo^s in M^r Jenner, lately arrived, y^t o^r charter was condemned, & judgment entred vp, &c, they lookt at it as an incumbent duty to acquaint the Court wth it, & leaue the consideration of what was or might be necessary to them, &c'' (Massachusetts Colony Records, v. 465).

Our associate Mr. Henry H. Edes has kindly called my attention to the fact that there is much information about the Jenners in Wyman's Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown, i. 551-553.

¹ 5 Massachusetts Historical Collections, v. 119.

² Letters, p. 65 note. The record, which is herewith reproduced, is as follows:

Witnesse these presents that I ffrancis Burrowes of Bostone Merchant doe binde my selfe, my Execut^{rs} and Administrat^{rs} to Edward Willis Treasurer of the Towne of Bostone in the sune of ffortie pounds in mony that John Dunton booke seller nor any of his ffamilie—shall not be chargable to this towne duringe his or any there abode therein. Witnesse my hand the 16th of february 1685.

That is sd Burrowes bindes him selfe as aboue to sd Willis & his success^{rs} in the Office of a Treasurer, omited in ye due place aboue

FRAN: BURROUGHS

JOHN DUNTON

The date in this entry is, of course, 1685-6. The entry is found in a small quarto book in the office of the City Clerk of Boston, who has kindly allowed it to be examined and photographed. The book is that described on p. 12 of City Document No. 171 (1899) as containing Bonds for Security against Strangers, 1679-1700.

with me those persons that
Francis Burroughs of Boston ^{Medford} for
him or my selfe my Execut^r and
Administrators to Edward Wilkes Treas^r
suer of the Town of Boston in
the sume of ffortie pounds in money
that John Duntun ~~had~~ ^{had} or
or any of his flammid ~~had~~ - shall
not be chargell to this Towne -
duringe his or any thereof then
in witness my hand the 16th.
of June 1685
that is so Burroughs under him selfe
as above to sd Burroughs & his success^r
in the Office of Treasuer & under
in sd place above

John Duntun -

Francis Burroughs

Bond of Francis Burroughs that John Duntun, a Stranger
shall not become a Charge upon the Town of Boston. 1685

Engraved for The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

kins's, "opposite to the Town-House," where he also lodged. He next presented various letters of introduction and began to look about him. Business did not, apparently, prevent him from making many "rambles" to neighboring towns or from cultivating the acquaintance of all who showed themselves friendly. He saw the execution of Morgan on March 11, and the arrival of Randolph on May 14. On July 5 he sailed for London, where he arrived one month later.¹

Dunton's subsequent career may be very briefly reviewed. He found his affairs involved in debt, was obliged to remain in hiding for ten months,² and then "took a trip over to Holland, Flanders, Germany, &c."³ He returned to London on November 15, 1688,⁴ and resumed business at "the sign of the Black Raven . . . opposite to the Poultry Compter."⁴ There for ten years he published, compiled, and projected to his heart's content. He was temporarily saddened by the death of his wife in 1697, but remarried within a year, went to Ireland on a bookselling venture, returned, published his famous *Life and Errors* in 1705, wrote profusely and violently until 1723, and died in obscurity ten years later.

This career certainly leaves the impression of an increasingly irresponsible person. As such John Dunton seems to have been regarded by many of his contemporaries. Swift, in the *Tale of a Tub* (1704), alludes to Dunton's voluminous and indiscriminate publishing projects,⁵ and in his *Publick Spirit of the Whigs* (1714) ironically praises Dunton's "famous tract entitled *Neck or Nothing*," which "must be allowed to be the shrewdest piece, and written with the most spirit, of any which has appeared from that side since the change of the ministry."⁶ The Earl of Sunderland thought him "an impudent Fellow," who had "abused the greatest men in the Nation."⁷ The writer of the footnote on Dunton in the *Dunciad* (ii. 144) agrees

¹ Letters, p. 301; *Life and Errors*, i. 137.

² *Life and Errors*, i. 138.

³ *Life and Errors*, i. 139.

⁴ *Life and Errors*, i. 151.

⁵ "I am informed, that worthy citizen and bookseller, Mr. John Dunton, has made a faithful and painstaking collection [of speeches], which he shortly designs to publish in twelve volumes in folio, illustrated with copper plates. A work highly useful and curious, and altogether worthy of such a hand" (Swift's Works, ed. Nichols, London, 1803, iii. 65).

⁶ vi. 182.

⁷ *Life and Errors*, ii. 760 note.

with Sunderland: "a broken¹ bookseller," the annotator calls him, "and an abusive scribbler. He wrote Neck or Nothing, a violent satire on some Ministers of State; a libel on the Duke of Devonshire and the Bishop of Peterborough, &c."² The London Post said of Dunton, "In spite of *native Dulness* [he] resolves to be a Wit, as he always did to be a Knave, in spite of . . . a whole volume of repentance."³ Charges of financial untrustworthiness are also abundant,⁴ though vague, and a certain R. Key seems to indicate that Dunton was known to be licentious in personal conduct.⁵ Certainly there is no lack of nastiness in some of Dunton's writings,⁶ however admirable the moral tone of most of them. I fancy Dunton to have had an utterly irresponsible and fluctuating nature, in which by turns immorality, repentance, credulity, and vindictiveness directed his unceasing frenzy for publication. "Mr. John Dunton, lunatick," is the succinct characterization of him in the second number of the Monitor (1714),⁷ and as early as 1707 Thomas Hearne records, "There is publish'd The II^d Part of the Pulpit Fool, by John Dunton a poor craz'd silly Fellow."⁸ Certainly Dunton becomes less puzzling if we regard him, at least in his later years, as partially insane. Yet his publications contain so much that is not his own, and the evidence of others about him is so full of prejudice and obscurity, that it is a very difficult matter to decide.

The Letters from New England are eight in number, one of them apparently written from West Cowes, six from Boston, and one after the return to London.

¹ John Nichols (Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, v. 78 note) has "auction bookseller," which J. B. Nichols (Life and Errors, vol. i. p. vi) repeats. But the reading in the annotated Dunciad (second edition) of 1729 (p. 107 note) is "broken bookseller." So it is in Elwin and Courthope's edition (iv. 140 note).

² Pope's Works, ed. Elwin and Courthope, iv. 140 note.

³ Life and Errors, ii. 465.

⁴ Life and Errors, Chapter xii, *passim*.

⁵ Life and Errors, ii. 759. The two letters from Key which Nichols reprints (Life and Errors, ii. 758-9) are distinctly those of a boon companion, not of a malicious critic.

⁶ The fourth "Project" in the second part of Athenianism (1710), for example.

⁷ Nichols, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, iv. 88 note.

⁸ Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne, ed. C. E. Doble, Oxford (Oxford Historical Society), 1886, ii. 26.

The first, "From West-Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, Octob. 25th, 1685," is addressed to his wife and narrates the embarkation and the beginning of the voyage. It is signed "Yrs Entirely / John Dunton."

The second letter, written from Boston, dated February 17, 1685-6, and addressed "To My Only Brother Mr. Lake Dunton. Lately Return'd from Surat in the East-Indies," completes the account of the voyage. It is signed "Your truly Loving and / Affectionate Brother, / Philaret."¹

The third letter, dated from Boston, March 25, 1686, is addressed to Mr. George Larkin, at London, and is signed "Philaret." This letter, which is one of the most important of the series, must have required a considerable sum in postage, for in Whitmore's edition it fills about ninety pages. In it, declares Dunton:

I shall observe this method:

1. Give you an Account of my Reception at Boston:
2. The Character of my Boston Landlord, his Wife and Daughter;
3. Give you an Account of my being admitted into the Freedom of this City:
4. I shall next describe the Town of Boston, it being the Metropolis of New-England; and say something of the Government, Law, and Customs thereof.
5. I shall relate the Visits I made, the Remarkable Friendships I contracted, and shall conclude with the character of Madam Brick as the Flower of Boston, and some other Ladyes, And I'll omit nothing that happened (if remarkable) during my stay here. And in all this I will not copy from others, as is usual with most Travellers, but relate my own Observations.²

In the fourth letter, without date or place, but addressed to Dunton's cousin, John Woolhurst, at London, and signed "Philaret," we have an account of Dunton's "rambles"³ to Charlestown,

¹ "Philaret (or Lover of Vertue) was the Name that Cloris gave me in all the Letters she sent to me during the Time of our Correspondence" (Dunton's *Athenianism*, 1710, p. 5 note). Cloris was Elizabeth Singer, afterwards Mrs. Rowe, "die göttliche Rowe," with whom Dunton enjoyed a Platonic correspondence, if the evidence of his "Character of Madam Singer" (the first of the "Projects" in his *Athenianism*) can be relied upon.

² Letters, pp. 56-57.

³ His own word.

Medford, New-Town, Winnisimmet,¹ Lynn, Nantascot, Wissagusset,² Braintree, Dorchester, and Roxbury. In the course of this letter we find short descriptions of these towns, a good deal about Indians, and an account of the apostle Eliot.

The fifth letter, undated, is to Dunton's father-in-law, Dr. Samuel Annesley, from his "Most Dutiful Son-in-Law, Philaret." It contains an account of the conversion of the Indians, for which Dunton modestly disclaims originality.³

The sixth letter is without date, but it contains letters between Dunton and his apprentice Palmer, which in the *Life and Errors*⁴ are dated April 4, 1686, and April 10, 1686. It is addressed to his wife and is signed "Your ever Faithful / Philaret." It describes his ramble to Salem, whither he went alone, "save that by an Intercourse of Souls, my Dear, I had your Company."⁵

The seventh letter, the last of those supposed to have been written from Boston, is addressed "To My Beloved Sister, Mrs. Sarah Dunton." It contains information about various matters relating to Indians, descriptions of Wenham and Ipswich, and two portraits of people. It has no date.⁶

The final letter, "To Mr. Richard Wilkins in Boston in New England," briefly assures his former landlord of Dunton's safe arrival in London and his happy reunion with his wife.

The earliest version of Dunton's account of New England is in the *Life and Errors* (1705).⁷ That account was very inadequately re-

¹ Now Chelsea.

² Now Weymouth.

³ Letters, p. 221.

⁴ Pp. 129, 130.

⁵ Letters, p. 249.

⁶ In it, however, Dunton writes, "In a few weeks I hope to take my Leave of this New World" (Letters, p. 298).

⁷ The / Life and Errors / Of / John Dunton / Late Citizen of London; / Written by Himself in Solitude. / With an Idea of a New Life; / Wherein is Shewn / How he'd Think, Speak, and Act, might he / Live over his Days again: / Intermix'd with the / New Discoveries / The Author has made / In his Travels Abroad, / And in his / Private Conversation at Home. / Together with the Lives and Characters of a Thou- / sand Persons now Living in London, &c. / Digested into Seven Stages, with their Respective Ideas. / He that has all his own Mistakes confest, / Stands next to him that never has transgressed, / And will be censur'd for a Fool by none, / But they who see no

printed in 1814 in the Massachusetts Historical Collections.¹ In 1818 John Bowyer Nichols did much better: he not only reprinted the *Life and Errors* much more accurately and fully,² but also added selections from Dunton's other works, prefixed a good memoir, and appended a calendar of the Dunton MS in the Bodleian Library.³

From these manuscripts a copy of the eight "Letters from New England" was made⁴ under the supervision of Colonel Joseph L.

Errors of their own. / *Foe's Satyr upon himself*, P. 6. / London: Printed for S. Malthus, 1705.

The copy formerly owned by Charles Eliot Norton is now in the Harvard University Library.

On the verso of p. 251 is advertised —

Preparing for the PRESS,
A Ramble through Six Kingdoms,
BY
JOHN DUNTON
LATE
Citizen of LONDON

Wherein he relates, 1. His *Juvenile Travels*. 2. The History of his *Sea Voyages*. 3. His *Conversation* in Foreign Parts.

With *Characters of Men and Women*, and almost ev'ry thing he Saw or Convers'd with.

The like Discoveries (in such a Method) never made by any Traveller before.

Illustrated with *Fourty Cuts*, representing the most pleasant Passages in the whole Adventure.

With *Recommendatory Poems*, written by the chief Wits in both Universities.

This Work will be finish'd by next *Michaelmas* and will be 2s. 6d. bound.

¹ Second Series, ii. 97-124. About one-third of the account is omitted without notice, the text is "improved" somewhat in the manner of Sparks, and the paragraphing is greatly changed.

² Even the edition of 1818, however, has omissions, generally not indicated: p. 98, character of Mr. C. (cf. ed. 1705, p. 131); p. 114, a paragraph omitted (cf. ed. 1705, pp. 156-157, and Letters, pp. 141-142); p. 122, one clause omitted (cf. ed. 1705, pp. 168-169); p. 133, a dialogue of about two and one-half pages on Platonic love omitted (cf. ed. 1705, pp. 125-128). These omitted passages, if restored, would make the book coarser and more discursive; in other words, more like the Chester MS of the Letters.

³ MS Rawl., Miscel. 71 and 72. See *Life and Errors*, ii. 753-760. These manuscripts contain Dunton's version of the Letters from New England, and more than eighty other pieces, most of which seem to be either actual letters to or from Dunton, or parts of fictitious correspondence. Often they are love letters, with answers in shorthand. There would seem to be material here for a more thorough study of Dunton's life and works than has yet been made.

⁴ This transcript, which I shall refer to as the Chester MS, is now in the possession of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Librarian of

Chester for the use of William Henry Whitmore, who first printed the Letters from New England in 1867 for the Prince Society. We are under great obligations to Whitmore for having made these letters accessible. One wishes very much, however, that he had reprinted the whole of the Chester MS: to have done so would have revealed Dunton's vulgarity and his excursiveness, which, however unattractive, are important if we wish to know him. Even more does one wish that Whitmore had indicated every erasure and interpolation in the Chester MS, for these bear vitally upon the question of the date and genuineness of the Letters, questions which Whitmore hardly raised at all.

One question which Whitmore did raise, however, and which he did much to settle, is the question of Dunton's importance as an original authority. Whitmore was able to show that nearly everything that Dunton tells us about the Indians is copied almost verbatim from either Roger Williams or Cotton Mather, though Dunton often takes pains to work over the information into monologues from imaginary persons whom he met on his rambles. Whitmore further shows borrowings from Josselyn's *Two Voyages* (1674) and from J. W.'s *Letter from New England* (1682). In all, Whitmore points out about thirty cases in which, without acknowledgment, Dunton appropriates rather long passages from earlier writers. This was much more than a curious discovery, for it very importantly modified the idea of the value and purpose of the book which we might otherwise have had.

When so much has been pointed out that is not original, one is naturally moved to see if there may not be still more. It appears that there is much more.

Here, for example, is an episode of Dunton's voyage and beside it a passage from Josselyn's *Two Voyages*:

JOSSELYN

About 8 of the clock at night, a flame settled upon the main mast, it was about the bigness of a great Candle, and

DUNTON

On the next Day, in the Captain's Cabin, we had hot debates about a Flame, which sometimes settles upon

which has kindly allowed me to consult it. The different letters are paged separately; in referring to the MS, accordingly, the letter as well as the page is specified.

is called by our Seamen *St. Elmes* fire, it comes before a storm, and is commonly thought to be a Spirit; if two appear they prognosticate safety: These are known to the learned by the names of *Castor* and *Pollux*, to the *Italians* by *St. Nicholas* and *St. Hermes*, by the *Spaniards* called *Corpos Santos* (ed. Veazie, p. 8).

the main mast of a Ship . . . It is about the bigness of a good large Candle, and was call'd by the Seamen *St. Ellines* Fire; it usually comes before a storm, and is commonly thought to be a Spirit; and here's the conjuration of it, that tho' one is look'd upon as an ill Omen, yet if two appear, they are said to Prognosticate Safety. These are known to the Learned by the names of *Castor* and *Pollux*: to the *Italians*, by *St. Nicholas* and *St. Hermes*, and are by the *Spaniards* called *Corpus Santos* (Letters, p. 31).

One cannot help wondering, after this, if the various sailors who told Dunton so much about the different fish they had met,¹ had not managed to commit to memory large portions of some not very reliable work on natural history, the identity of which has thus far eluded our search.

In the fifth letter there is a rather distinct bit of description of the country through which Dunton rode on his trip to Natick. The letter is addressed to Dr. Annesley:

As we rid along that lovely valley I have mention'd, Sir, we saw many lovely Lakes or Ponds, well stored with Fish and Beavers: These, they tell me, are the original of all the great Rivers in the Countrey, of which there are many, besides lesser Streams, manifesting the Goodness of the Soil, which is in some places black, in others red, with clay, Gravel, Sand and Loom, and very deep in some places, as in the Valleys and Swamps, which are low grounds, and bottoms, infinitely thick set with Trees and Bushes of all sorts; others having no other Shrubs or Trees growing but Spruce, under the Shades whereof we Rambled two or three miles together, being goodly large Trees, and convenient for Masts and Sail-Yards (Letters, p. 216).

Josselyn had written:

Within these valleys are spacious lakes or ponds well stored with Fish and Beavers; the original of all the great Rivers in the Countrie, of which there are many with lesser streams (wherein are an infinite of fish) manifesting the goodness of the soil which is black, red-clay, gravel, sand, loom, and very deep in some places, as in the valleys and swamps, which

¹ Letters, pp. 24 ff.

are low grounds and bottoms infinitely thick set with Trees and Bushes of all sorts for the most part, others having no other shrub or Tree growing, but spruce, under the shades whereof you may freely walk two or three mile together; being goodly large Trees, and convenient for masts and sail-yards (Two Voyages, pp. 37-38).

It will be noticed that Dunton relies upon the authority of Josselyn to determine even the length of his ramble. Josselyn writes: "you may walk freely two or three mile together." Dunton echoes: "We rambled two or three miles together." No traveller ever followed his Baedeker more faithfully.

That Josselyn actually was Dunton's Baedeker appears when we examine the short descriptions of the various towns which Dunton visited in his rambles. There are twelve of them in all,¹ and the description of each² is taken almost verbatim from Josselyn. The account of Nantascot is a fair example:

¹ There is no description of Medford in the Letters: perhaps because Josselyn has none. Whitmore noted (pp. 66-69) that Dunton's description of Boston is borrowed from Josselyn.

² The question where Josselyn got his descriptions of these towns is interesting. Some of them (Boston, Charlestown, New-Town, Lynn, Dorchester, Roxbury, Wenham, and Ipswich) he could have got, either wholly or in part, from Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence* (1654); in all of them except the description of Wenham he may have borrowed from Wood's *New Englands Prospect* (1634). But of the three books (Wood, Johnson, and Josselyn) we know that Dunton must have used Josselyn. For convenience a list of these descriptions of towns is added, with page references to Wood (as edited by Charles Deane in 1865 for the Prince Society), Johnson (ed. J. F. Jameson, New York, 1910) and Josselyn (Veazie's edition):

| | Wood 41-42 | Johnson 70-71 | Josselyn 124-125 |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|------------------|
| Boston | | | |
| Charlestown | " 43 | " 68-69 | " 126 |
| New-Town | " 43 | " 90 | " 127 |
| Winnisimmet | " 44 | " — | " 128 |
| Lynn | " 45 | " 73 | " 128 |
| Nantascot | " 3 | " — | " 122-123 |
| Wissaguset | " 40 | " — | " 123 |
| Braintree | " 40 | " — | " 123 |
| Dorchester | " 41 | " 69-70 | " 123-124 |
| Roxbury | " 41 | " 71-72 | " 124 |
| Wenham | " — | " 226 | " 129-130 |
| Ipswich or Agawam | " 48-49 | " 96 | " 129 |

It is curious that Josselyn follows Wood's order very closely in describing these towns, and that Dunton follows Josselyn's order with equal closeness.

JOSSELYN

. . . a Town called *Nantascot*, which is two Leagues from *Boston*, where Ships commonly cast Anchor.

Pullin-point is so called, because the Boats are . . . haled against the Tide which is very strong, it is the usual Channel for Boats to pass into *Mat-tachusetts-Bay*.

There is an Island on the South-side of the passage containing eight Acres of ground. Upon a rising hill within this Island is mounted a Castle commanding the entrance, no stately Edifice, nor strong; built with Brick and Stone, kept by a Captain, under whom is a master-Gunner and others.

. . . The *Bay* is large,

made by many Islands, the chief *Deere-Island*, which is within a flight shot of *Pullin-point*, great store of *Deere* were wont to swim thither from the Main; then *Bird-Island*, *Glass-Island*, *Slate-Island*, the Governours Garden, where the first Apple-Trees in the Countrey were planted, and a vineyard; then *Round-Island*, and *Noddles-Island* not far from *Charles-Town*; most of these Islands lye on the North-side of the *Bay* (pp. 122-3).

DUNTON

Being come to *Nantascot* we took a survey of the Town, which is a Sea-Port, about two Leagues from *Boston*, where ships commonly cast Anchor: near which is *Pullin Point*, so called, because the Boats are haled against the Tide, which is very strong. It is the usual Channel for Boats to pass into the *Massachusetts Bay*. On the South Side of the Passage there is an Island containing about Eight Acres of ground; Upon a rising Hill within this Island is mounted a Castle. Here 'twas we first Landed, when I came into the Countrey; Tho' this Castle be no stately Edifice, nor very strong, being built with Brick and Stone, yet it commands the Entrance, so that no Ship can pass by without its leave: It is kept by a Captain, under whom is a Master-Gunner, and some others.

I then took a transient view of *Pullin-Point*. The *Bay* is large, and has *Boston* in view, as soon as you enter into it: It is made by many Islands, the chiefest of which is the *Dear Island*, which is within a flight shot of *Pullin-Point*: It is called *Dear Island*, because great store of *Deer* were wont to swim thither from the main Land: We then viewed *Bird Island*, *Glass-Island*, *State-Island*, and the Governour's Garden, where the first Apple trees in the Countrey were planted, and there also was planted a Vineyard: Then there is *Round Island*, so called from the figure of it, and last of all *Noddles Island*, not far from *Charles-Town*. Most of these Islands lie on the North-Side of the *Bay* (Letters, pp. 179-180).

All this does not prove that Dunton did not visit these places, for we know that he saw *Boston* with his own eyes, even though he avails himself of *Josselyn's* description of it. But it is clear that we can-

¹ So in *Whitmore*.

not use Dunton's descriptions to show what these towns were like in 1686.

It is now time to raise the whole question of the date and genuineness¹ of these Letters. In his preface Whitmore observes:²

In regard to the point as to these being the letters written at the time, Mr. Chester says that he does not regard them as letters actually sent from Boston to the parties addressed. They were all written in a uniform hand, on uniform paper, and may be considered rather as a journal, kept probably during his sojourn at Boston, and intended for publication. The other theory would be that this was his letter-book, in which, according to the custom of the times, he kept copies of the letters sent.

Mr. Chester adds: "The interpolations and emendations are numerous, and some of them clearly of a later date. Sometimes entire pages were evidently after-thoughts, and occur at the end of the volume, being referred to by marks in the body of the MSS."

Further than this Whitmore did not go. We do not know, therefore, which pages were added; indeed we know hardly anything about the author's minor changes except what we can learn from the Chester MS in the library of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. A week at the Bodleian might clear up many difficulties. Nevertheless, with the text as we have it something can be done.

On the very first page of the Letters from New England there is a note, which Whitmore prints as a footnote, in which Dunton refers by page to his "lately published Farewell to Dublin." The farewell to Dublin — the actual event — took place late in December of 1698, and the Dublin Scuffle, of which the Farewell seems to have formed a part, was not published until 1699. Again, at the very end³ of his Letters, and also in his account of the negligence of his apprentice,⁴ Dunton has passages in which he gets nearly a year ahead of the date which must be assumed for the eighth letter, if we are to suppose that the entire manuscript represents a body of letters actually sent from New England. It is therefore at least clear that we have

¹ Genuineness as *letters*, I mean. The identity of the author is not being called in question.

² P. iv.

³ Pp. 305-306.

⁴ P. 259.

in the Chester MS certain passages which could not have been written from Boston in the year 1686. It remains to ask, then, whether such passages are numerous and incorporated in the letters, or whether they constitute merely a few such notes as the two just cited.

In the second letter, dated March 25, 1686, we have a reference to "Major Dudley, afterwards President."¹ Now Joseph Dudley's commission as President did not arrive until May, 1686.² Again, we have in the same letter, under date March 25, 1686, the following sentence: "Another Occurrence that happened whilst I was here, was, the Arrival of the Rose Frigot from England with a New Charter brought over by one Rundel" [Randolph].³ But this event did not take place until May 14, 1686.⁴ However, it may be urged that Dunton should be forgiven any slight confusion of dates, provided he limits himself in these letters to the narration of events which occurred before his departure, on July 5, 1686.

But Dunton does not by any means keep within even these rather generous limits. His account of John Eliot⁵ is largely taken verbatim from Cotton Mather's *Life of Eliot*, which was not published until 1691.⁶ He refers⁷ to the publication of the life of Nathaniel Mather, which did not appear until 1689.⁸ He quotes from Increase

¹ Letters, p. 65.

² Everett Kimball, *The Public Life of Joseph Dudley* (Harvard Historical Studies), New York, 1911, pp. 24-25.

³ Letters, p. 137.

⁴ Sewall's Diary for May 14, 1686 (i. 137-139). What Randolph brought was the exemplification of the judgment against the charter and the commission for the new government. Sewall (Diary for May 17, 1686) describes the meeting at which Dudley showed these papers and announced to the General Court that he "could treat them no longer as Governour and Company."

⁵ Letters, pp. 194 ff.

⁶ Sibley, No. 32. Cotton Mather's *Life of John Eliot* was first published at Boston in 1691. In the same year Dunton brought out a second edition in London. According to advertisements in the *Athenian Mercury* this second edition seems to have appeared on or about August 3, 1691 (*Athenian Mercury*, vol. iii. nos. 2 and 3). There was a third edition (London: John Dunton) in 1694, and the work was also reprinted in the *Magnalia*. Which of these Dunton used I do not know.

⁷ "Having taken my leave of Mr. Cotton and Nathaniel Mather (whose *Life* I afterwards Printed) and after that, of their Reverend Father, I return'd home hugely pleas'd with my first Visit" (p. 75).

⁸ Sibley, No. 7. This work, "Printed by J. Astwood for J. Dunton, 1689," was entered in Trinity Term, 1689 (Arber, *Term Catalogues*, ii. 268). Nathaniel Mather died October 17, 1688.

Mather's letter to Dr. John Leusden, which is dated July 12, 1687.¹ More curious still is a remark² made in connection with Cotton Mather. "Cotton Mather . . . has very lately finish'd a Church-History of New-England, which I'm going to print." Now, as every reader of Cotton Mather's Diary knows, the *Magnalia* was not finished until 1697.³ Another allusion,⁴ which is somewhat less obvious, carries the date still further forward. After portraying the admirable character of Comfort Wilkins, Mrs. Green, and Madam Brick, Dunton remarks, "And now Sir Daniel, I suppose you'll give some grains of Allowance to Sir John: For I believe such Females as these, wou'd set even a Gentleman of more Reformation, a longing for further Acquaintance with 'em, without making it a Crime."⁵ This allusion can be to no one but Daniel Defoe, who in reply to the attacks made upon his *Reformation of Manners* (1702), published "More Reformation. / A / Satyr / Upon / Himself. / By the Author Of / The True Born English-Man." But Defoe's *More Reformation* was not entered for publication until Michaelmas Term of 1703,⁶ and bears the date 1703 upon its title-page. All of these passages, except one, throw the date forward indefinitely from 1686. The only passage which suggests two limits is the very interesting one in connection with the *Magnalia*, for it is extremely unlikely that after 1702, in which year the *Magnalia* was published by Thomas Parkhurst, Dunton would have written, even in the rough draft of these Letters, that the *Magnalia* was a work "which I'm going to print." Except for this clause, I see nothing in the Letters to show that they

¹ *Magnalia*, 1702, bk. iii. pp. 194-195.

² Letters, p. 75.

³ Diary for August 20, 1697 (7 Massachusetts Historical Collections, vii. 227). It seems almost impossible that "a Church-History of New England" can refer to any of Cotton Mather's works except the *Magnalia*, which is regularly referred to by that title in the Diary and which is outlined under that title ("A Scheme of his Church-History of New England") in Cotton Mather's *Johannes in Eremo*, 1695 (Sibley, No. 52).

⁴ Letters, p. 112.

⁵ P. 112. In the first edition of the *Life and Errors* (p. 147) "Sir Daniel" and "More Reformation" are printed in capitals; in the Chester MS (Letter iii, pp. 52-53), they are not.

⁶ Arber, *Term Catalogues*, iii. 371. The Harvard University Library has a copy which, though quite clearly of the first edition, has the date trimmed off. Note that the motto on the title-page of the *Life and Errors* is from Defoe's *More Reformation*, which is there referred to by its sub-title (see p. 220 note 7).

were not written after the *Life and Errors* (1705).¹ But without use of the MS at the Bodleian, it is impossible to do more, though it is certainly impossible to do less, than to cast general doubt upon the date of the entire work.

We can immediately answer in the negative the question, Is this work in its present form a body of actual letters? It is clear that the letters as we have them have been worked over to make a book, if, indeed, they ever were actual letters. The mere fact that Dunton frequently appeals to "the reader"² suffices to show this, if, indeed, any further evidence were needed than the inordinate length and the general tone of the work.³

But although it is clear that the author intended to make a book, it is equally clear that he had not finished preparing the copy for the press. In the Chester MS, for instance, we have at one point⁴ the note: "Here insert the Poem upon Punch, out of Ratchiff's Rambles."⁵

¹ Possibly an exception should be made to this generalization. In his account (p. 194) of John Eliot, Dunton, who is following Cotton Mather's account very closely, writes: "And this Wife of his Youth [Eliot's] became also the Staff of his Age, and left him not *until about half a year ago*." The italics are mine. Cotton Mather had written (*Life of Eliot*, London [John Dunton], 1694, p. 7; *Magnalia*, ed. 1702, bk. iii. p. 173), "she left him not until about three or four Years before his own Departure unto those Heavenly Regions where they now together see light." This is very puzzling. John Eliot's wife died March 22, 1687 (*Savage, Genealogical Dictionary*, ii. 110). "About half a year" after that takes us to September, 1687, as the approximate date when that particular sentence was written. But Dunton is quoting an account which, presumably, was not accessible to him before 1691. Why, when he was changing Mather's words, he did not put the date back so that it would agree with the supposed date of his letter, is very hard to see.

² "And thus, Reader, I have given you the humours of a far different sort of Ladies from the former" (p. 116). So on pp. 102 and 105. The word "Reader" is used in the corresponding passages (pp. 103, 106, 108) of the *Life and Errors*. I conjecture that Dunton neglected to remove the word when he elaborated these passages from the *Life and Errors*.

³ The point is made clearer by an examination of the Chester MS. The parts which Whitmore omits are, in almost every case, destructive of the idea that Dunton's chapters are actual letters.

⁴ Chester MS, Letter i, p. 12. The poem, if inserted in the Letters, would be on p. 13, after the sentence which now concludes the paragraph.

⁵ This was Alexander Radcliffe's "Bacchanalia Cœlestia: a Poem, in Praise of Punch, compos'd by the Gods and Goddesses," 1680. It was reprinted in "The Ramble: an anti-heroick Poem. Together with some Terrestrial Hymns and Carnal Ejaculations," 1682. There is a short sketch of Alexander Radcliffe in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It is to be noted that the sub-title of Radcliffe's poem explains the sentence referred to in the previous note.

That at least a portion of the composition of these Letters was after Dunton had forgotten (if he ever knew them by experience) some of the details of his visit is suggested by these and other scattered bits of evidence. For instance, it is remarkable to find that, although Dunton assures us of the intimacy of his acquaintance with such men as Higginson, Gerrish, and Hubbard, he gets their names wrong, as well as the names of other people¹ who are incidentally mentioned. Dunton's almost complete omission of matters of public concern is another fact in point. For example, he says nothing whatever about the epidemic of small-pox, although so great was the affliction that March 25, 1686, the very date of the letter wherein so many of his characters occur, was "appointed . . . to be kept as a Day of Solemn Humiliation and Prayer throughout this Colony." The General Court had even voted to "recommend it to the Elders and Ministers of the respective Churches, to promote this work on the said day; forbidding Servile Labour to all People within this Jurisdiction, thereon."² All this could hardly have occurred if the Letters in their present form were based upon real letters, or upon a journal dating from the period of his actual visit.

In fact, it must be granted that Dunton is a highly unreliable person, whose narrative cannot be accepted as a record of historical fact. As an instance of this let me cite the account of the execution of Morgan.³ Dunton assures us that after the sermon he and Cotton Mather rode to the place of execution, that a great crowd followed, and that from where he was he caught occasional glimpses of Morgan.⁴ But if Dunton had been where he says he was on this occasion, he could have seen Morgan without difficulty, for we know that Cotton Mather *walked beside the criminal to the place of the execu-*

¹ Including one as important as Randolph, whom Dunton calls Randal (Life and Errors, ed. 1705, p. 152). He also has Higgins for Higginson and Geery for Gerrish (Letters, pp. 254-255, 272), although he says that he was entertained by both. Yet of course the spelling of proper names in the seventeenth century, even by their owners, was vagarious.

² Sewall's Diary for March 17, 1686 (i. 128).

³ Letters, pp. 118 ff. James Morgan, for the crime of murder, was executed on March 11, 1686.

⁴ "But before I leave off this subject, I must bring Morgan to his Execution, whither I rid with Mr. Cotton Mather, after the Sermon was ended. Some thousands of the People following to see the Execution. As I rid along I had several glimpses of poor Morgan, as he went " (Letters, p. 135).

tion.¹ The close of this day of Morgan's execution was made happy for Dunton by a picnic. He tells us that he and half a dozen others got a boat and rowed to Governor's Island, had a kind of barbecue, treated the ladies, and returned in the evening.² Now a person who has just witnessed an execution is certainly entitled to go upon a picnic if he so desires. And yet nothing would seem to be more discouraging than certain conditions on the day of this picnic, the date of which was March 11. The winter had been very severe, and although the harbor was no longer frozen over, it had but recently begun to open.³ Moreover, Morgan was not "turned off" until half-past five;⁴ so Dunton could hardly have started on his picnic before dark; and, to make the affair seem even more dismal, we find from Sewall's Diary that it rained nearly all the evening.⁴ All that can be said, and all that needs to be said, is that Dunton's accounts of the execution and of the picnic make a remarkable contrast, and that is probably what he was chiefly aiming at.

It remains to consider the most interesting part of the Letters, — the portraits of people.

It is more than a coincidence that in speaking of these portraits Dunton almost always employs the same word. He uses it on his title-page, he uses it in outlining the third letter (for our immediate purpose the most important of them all), and he often uses it in introducing or concluding his accounts of particular people. That

¹ "Mr. Cotton Mather accompanied James Morgan to the place of Execution and prayed with him there" (Sewall's Diary, March 11, 1686, i. 126).

"There has been since, a second Edition of the Book [the sermons on Morgan's crime and punishment preached by Increase Mather, Joshua Moody, and Cotton Mather. First edition, Boston, 1686; second edition, Boston, 1687], with a Copy of my Discourse with the poor Malefactor walking to his Execution added at the End" (Cotton Mather's Diary for February 12, 1686, 7 Massachusetts Historical Collections, vii. 123). Mather's note is written in the margin. For an account of this book see Sibley, No. 5, and also p. 250 note 2, below.

² "But from the House of Mourning, I rambled to the House of Feasting; for Mr. York, Mr. King, with Madam Brick, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Toy, the Damsell [Comfort Wilkins] and my self, took a Ramble to a place call'd Governour's Island, about a mile from Boston, to see a whole Hog roasted, as did several other Bostonians. We went all in a Boat; and having treated the Fair Sex, returned in the Evening" (Letters, p. 137).

³ Sewall's Diary, February, 1, 3, 7, 12, 13; March 12 (i. 120, 121, 126-127).

⁴ Sewall's Diary, March 11, 1686 (i. 126).

word is "character," as employed in the following sentence: "And thus, Reader, I have given you the Character of another of my Female Friends in Boston."¹

The "character" in this sense of the word, was a well recognized, prolific, popular, and influential form in English literature of the seventeenth century.² We are fortunate in having several contemporary definitions of it, the most explicit and interesting of which is that in a school-book, published in 1665 by Ra[ph] Johnson, who gives not only a definition of the character but also three rules for making one. The full title of the book, of which the Harvard University Library contains a copy, is as follows:

The / Scholars Guide / From the Accidence to the / University. / Or, / Short, Plain, and Easie Rules for per- / forming all manner of Exercise in the Grammar School, viz. / Rules for Spelling, Orthography, Pointing, Construing, / Parsing, making Latine, placing Latine, Variation, Amplifica- / tion, Allusion, Imitation, Observation, Moving-passion. / As Also / Rules for making Colloquys, Essays, Fables, Prosopo- / pæia's, Characters, Themes, Epistles, Orations, Declama- / tions of all sorts. / Together With / Rules for Tránslation, Variation, Imitation, / Carmen, / Epi- / grams, Dialogues, Eccho's, Epitaphs, Hymnes /

¹ Letters, p. 105. On his title-page (p. [5]), Dunton announces "Particular Characters of Men and Women;" in outlining his third letter he proposes to write "The Character of my Boston Landlord, his Wife and Daughter" and to "conclude with the character of Madam Brick as the Flower of Boston, and some other Ladies" (p. 57). And cf. pp. 61, 63, 88, 93, 98, 102, 110, 112, 281.

² The character becomes more intelligible as a manifestation of its time if we recall the fact that the influence of classicism was favorable to characterization by rather strict adherence to type. From Aristotle onward, in fact, there is a series of explicit instructions and criticisms on this point. The following passage, from Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), is a good seventeenth-century example:

The propriety of *Manners* consists in a Conformity of Practise and Principle; of Nature, and Behaviour. For the purpose: An old Man must not appear with the Profuseness and Levity of Youth; A Gentleman must not talk like a Clown, nor a Country Girl like a Town Jilt. And when the *Characters* are feign'd 'tis *Horace's* Rule to keep them Uniform, and consistent, and agreeable to their first setting out. The *Poet* must be careful to hold his *Persons* tight to their *Calling* and pretensions. He must not shift, and shuffle their Understandings; Let them skip from Wits to Blockheads, nor from Courtiers to Pedants. On the other hand. If their business is playing the Fool, keep them strictly to their Duty, and never indulge them in fine Sentences. To manage otherwise, is to desert *Nature*, and makes the *Play* appear monstrous, and Chimerical. So that instead of an *Image of Life*, 'tis rather an Image of Impossibility (third edition, 1698, pp. 218-219).

Anagrams, / Acrostichs, Chronostichs, &c / By Ra[lph] Johnson Schoolmaster. / [motto] / London, / Printed for Tho. Pierrepont *at the Sun in St Pauls Church-yard*, 1665.

The definition and rules¹ are these:

A character is a witty and facetious description of the nature and qualities of some person, or sort of people.

1. Chuse a Subject, viz. such a sort of men as will admit of variety of observation, such be, drunkards, usurers, lyars, taylors, excise-men, travellers, pedlars, merchants, tapsters, lawyers, an upstart gentleman, a young Justice, a Constable, an Alderman, and the like.

2. Express their natures, qualities, conditions; practices, tools, desires, aims, or ends, by witty Allegories, or Allusions, to things or terms in nature, or art, of like nature and resemblance, still striving for wit and pleasantness, together with tart nipping jerks about their vices or miscarriages.

3. Conclude with some witty and neat passage, leaving them to the effect of their follies or studies.

It would be merely speculation, though not absurd speculation, to say that John Dunton himself may have had to commit this passage to memory; but it is surely not speculation to infer, merely from the presence of a definition of the "character" in a single book of this kind, that the form was generally recognized and that it was practised in schools just when that fact might easily have influenced Dunton.

That inference can be amply supported from other definitions of the character and from the existence of a very large number of books containing characters. Let us first supplement Johnson's definition from other seventeenth-century sources, and then consider some of the principal books of characters that Dunton may have known.

In 1614, just after the shameful death of Sir Thomas Overbury, there appeared a famous collection of characters by Overbury and his friends. The first edition, containing twenty-one characters, was soon followed by others with additional characters. The ninth impression,² 1616, has no fewer than eighty-two characters, of which one is a definition of a character, as follows:

¹ P. 15.

² Sir Thomas Overbury / His / Wife. / With / Addition Of / many new Elegies upon his / untimely and much lamented death. / As Also / New Newes, and diuers more Characters, / (neuer before annexed) written by him- / selfe

To square out a character by our English levell it is a picture (reall or personall) quaintly drawne, in various colours, all of them heightned by one shadowing.

It is a quick and soft touch of many strings, all shutting up in one musically close; it is wits descant on any plaine song.¹

Although the author of this, by practising the quaintness which he preaches, may seem to have confused the subject rather than defined it, yet in one important respect he does modify the impression left by Johnson: he shows that the character may have for its subject a thing as well as a person. As a matter of fact, there are a great many impersonal characters.²

Another modification needs to be made in Johnson's definition — or rather in the impression left by his rules; the character is by no means necessarily adverse. Fuller's "Holy State" is more than three times as large as his "Profane State;" Hall gives us eleven "Characterisms of Virtues;" Earle has such types as a Grave Divine, a Contemplative Man, a Good Old Man; Overbury has A Wise Man, A Noble Spirit, and many others. In fact, almost every writer of characters except Samuel Butler composed many that were not adverse.

Various other character-writers³ contribute to a definition. They show us that the character is brief,⁴ witty,⁵ and didactic in purpose.⁶ and other learned Gentlemen. / The ninth impression augmented. / London, / Printed by Edward Griffin for Laurence L'isle, and / are to be sold at his shop at the Tigers head in / Pauls Churchyard, 1616 (British Museum, 12331. aa. 46).

¹ Overbury's *Miscellaneous Works*, ed. E. F. Rimbault (Library of Old Authors), London, 1856, pp. 168-169.

² Overbury himself has a character of a prison: Earle (1628) has characters of a tavern, a bowling-alley, Paul's Walk, and a prison; and of the thirty-six characters in Donald Lupton's *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, and *Quartred into Seuerall Characters* (1632) only nine are of people. The last book, however, is exceptional in this respect.

³ There are definitions of the character in S. Person's *An Anatomical Lecture of Man . . . in Essays and Characters*, 1664; Richard Flecknoe's *Fifty-five Enigmatical Characters*, 1665; *Seventy-eight Characters of so many Vertuous and Vitious Persons*, 1677; Sir Roger L'Estrange's *A Brief History of the Times &c. in a Preface to the Third Volume of Observators*, 1687.

⁴ "Every line is a sentence, & every two a period . . . ; tis all *matter*, and to the *matter*, and has nothing of superfluity, nothing of circumlocution" (Flecknoe).

"Here a man writes a great deal in a little room" (Person).

⁵ That the character strives for wit has already appeared from the definitions of Overbury and Johnson.

⁶ "It not only delights but teaches and moves withall, and is a *Sermon* as well as *Picture* to every one" (Flecknoe).

They also show us — and this is important in considering Dunton — that the character is generic though at the same time faithful to life,¹ and that the writer of characters intentionally exaggerates² by making the good people better than in real life and the bad people worse.³

¹ "It is the Counterpane of Natures Book, and also of each Individuum" (Person).

"The subject of them is taken from the observations of several *Natures*, *Humors*, and *Dispositions*; and whilst I name no body, let no body name themselves if they be wise" (Seventy-eight Characters).

"A Character, . . . Shoots *Hail-Shot*, and *Strikes* a great many *more* than ever the *Marks-man*, either *Aim'd* at, or *Dreamt* of" (L'Estrange).

This last phase of the matter is excellently put in the dialogue about the "Character-Coat" in Defoe's Review (vol. vii. numb. 15) reprinted in Mr. Andrew McFarland Davis's *A Bibliographical Puzzle* (Publications of this Society, xiii. 9-10).

² "It extols to *Heaven*, or depresses into *Hell*; having no mid'place for *Purgatory* left" (Flecknoe).

³ To bring to a close this explanation of the character there is reprinted below John Earle's portrait of "A Modest Man," which appeared in 1628 in the *Microcosmography*:

A Modest Man

Is a far finer men than he knows of; one that shewes better to all men then himselfe, and so much the better to al men, as lesse to himselfe: for no quality sets a man off like this, and commends him more against his will: And he can put up any injury sooner then this, (as he calls it) your Irony. You shall heare him confute his commenders, and giving reasons how much they are mistaken, and is angry almost, if they do not beleeeve him. Nothing threatens him so much as great expectation, which he thinks more prejudiciall then your under-opinion, because it is easier to make that false then this true. He is one that sneaks from a good action, as one that had pilfered, and dare not justifie it, and is more blushingly deprehended in this, then others in sin. That counts al publike declarings of himselfe but so many penances before the people, and the more you applaud him, the more you abash him, and he recovers not his face a moneth after. One that is easie to like anything of another man's, and thinkes all hee knowes not of him better then that he knowes. He excuses that to you, which another would impute, and if you pardon him, is satisfied. One that stands in no opinion because it is his owne, but suspects it rather, because it is his owne, and is confuted, and thanks you. Hee sees nothing more willingly then his errors; and it is his error sometimes to be too soone perswaded. He is content to be Auditor, where hee only can speake, and content to goe away, and thinke himselfe instructed. No man is so weake that he is ashamed to learne of, and is lesse ashamed to confesse it: and he findes many times even in the dust, what others overlooke and lose. Every man's presence is a kinde of bridle to him, to stop the roving of his tongue and passions: and even impudent men looke for this reverence from him, and distaste that in him, which they suffer in themselves, as one in whom vice is ill-favoured, and shewes more scurvily then another. And hee is coward to nothing more then an ill tongue, and whosoever dare lye on him hath power over him,

It is perhaps beginning to be clear that the character was a popular and prolific form. Bishop Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608) contained twenty-six separate characters; Overbury's characters, eighty-two in all, reached an eighteenth impression in 1664; Earle's *Microcosmography*, first published in 1628, contained seventy-eight characters and reached an eighth edition within sixteen years. Thomas Fuller's *The Holy and the Profane State* (1642), which contained forty-nine characters, went through at least four editions by 1663. Samuel Butler's characters, posthumously published, number no fewer than one hundred and eighty-seven. These are merely the greater names. In addition there were scores by minor or anonymous authors, and also — particularly after the beginning of the Civil War — an immense number of pamphlets containing single characters. It would, in fact, be an entirely sober statement to say that when Dunton sailed for New England he might, had he collected character books as George Thomason did his pamphlets, have been the possessor of between three and four hundred of these volumes, containing in all considerably over a thousand separate characters.¹

But let me not by mentioning George Thomason seem to disparage the labors of John Dunton, particularly with reference to the character. For the fact is that of the portraits in the *Letters from New England* — Mr. Heath, Dr. Bullivant, the jailer, Mrs. Green, the Widow Brick, and all the rest of them — no fewer than thirty-two are, either wholly or in part, taken almost verbatim from such books of characters as we have been discussing. The discovery of this fact, which radically modifies our estimate of the *Letters*, is the chief occasion for this paper.

and if you take him by his looke, he is guilty. The maine ambition of his life is not to be discredited: and for other things, his desires are more limited then his fortunes, which he thinkes preferment though never so meane, and that he is to doe something to deserve this. Hee is too tender to venter on great places, and would not hurt a dignity to helpe himselfe. If he doe, it was the violence of his friends constrained him, and how hardly soever hee obtaine it, he was harder perswaded to seeke it.

¹ E. C. Baldwin's bibliography of character-books (*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, New Series, xii. no. 1, pp. 104-114), though the largest in print, could be supplemented by hundreds of other titles. The collections and notes of Philip Bliss, appended to his edition (London, 1811) of Earle's *Microcosmography*, are very useful. Some of the best characters are collected in Henry Morley's *Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century* (Morley's Universal Library, London, 1891).

To see how he does it let us place side by side Dunton's character of Mr. Heath¹ and Thomas Fuller's character of "The Good Merchant" in the Holy and the Profane State (1642):²

FULLER

... He wrongs not the buyer in number, weight, or measure.

These are the landmarks of all trading, which must not be removed: for such cozenage were worse than open felony. First, Because they rob a man of his purse and never bid him stand. . . . Thirdly, as much as lies in their power, they endeavour to make God accessory to their cozenage, . . . For God is the principal clerk of the market: *all the weights of the bag are his work.* Prov. xvi. 11.

2. He never warrants any ware for good, but what is so indeed . . . 5. He makes no advantage of his chapman's ignorance, chiefly if referring himself to his honesty: where the seller's conscience is all the buyer's skill, who makes him both seller and judge, so that he doth not so much ask as order what he must pay.

... When one told old Bishop Latimer that the cutler had cozened him in making him pay twopence for a knife, not in those days worth a penny:

DUNTON

The next I'll mention shall be Mr. Heath — a grave and sober Merchant: And were I now to write the Character of a good Merchant, I wou'd as soon take him for the Exemplar of one, as any Man I know. This I am sure, he never wrongs the Man that buys of him, in Number, Weight or Measure. For 'tis his Judgment that these are the Statute Laws of Trade, which, like those of the Medes and Persians, must never be remov'd; and I have heard him say that such a Cozenage is worse than open Felony; because they rob a Man of's Purse, and never bid him stand; and besides that they Endeavour to make God accessory to their cozenage by false weights: For God is the Principal Clerk of the Market: All the Weights of the Bag (as Solomon tells us, Prov. 16, 11,) being his Work. There are two things remarkable in him, (and I will instance no more.) One is, That he never warrants any Ware for good, but what is so indeed: And the other, That he makes no Advantage of his Chapman's ignorance, especially if he refers himself to his Honesty. Where the Conscience of the Seller is all the Skill of the Buyer, the Seller is made the Judge, so that he doth not so much ask as Order what he must pay. I have read that old Bishop Latimer once bought a knife that cost him two pence (which was it seems accounted a great Price in those days), and shewing it unto his Friend, he told him, The Cutler had cozen'd him, for the knife was not worth a

¹ Letters, pp. 88-89.

² I have used Pickering's edition, London, 1840. The character there occupies pages 88-91.

No, quoth Latimer, he cozened not me, but his own conscience. One the other side, St. Augustine¹ tells us of a seller, who out of ignorance asked for a book far less than it was worth; and the buyer (conceive himself to be the man if you please) of his own accord gave him the full value thereof.

penny: No, replied Latimer, he cozen'd not me, but his own Conscience. So far from that was this honest Gentleman, that when a Bookseller (that shall be nameless) did out of Ignorance demand less for a Book than it was truly worth, he of his own accord gave him the full value of it. This honest Gentleman did me the favour to be my daily Visitor, and has brought me acquainted with one Mr. Gore of New York, with whom I trade, which I hope will be to my advantage.

The character of Daniel Epes² of Salem is worth noting, partly because it occurs in the *Life and Errors*³ though not in the *Letters*, and partly because in forming this portrait Dunton, instead of taking a single earlier character, as he usually does, has combined Earle's "Downright Scholar" and his "Contemplative Man,"⁴ both printed in 1628:

EARLE

He has not humbled his meditations to the industry of complement, nor afflicted his brain in an elaborate leg. . . . He cannot kiss his hand and cry, madam, nor talk idle enough to bear her company. . . . The hermitage of his study has made him somewhat uncouth in the world, . . . He will not lose his time by being busy, or make so poor a use of the world as to hug and embrace it.

DUNTON

I must also remember the great civilities I met at Salem from Mr. *Epes*, (the most eminent Schoolmaster in New-England): He hath sent many Scholars to the University in New-England. He is much of a Gentleman; yet has not humbled his meditations to the industry of compliments, nor afflicted his brain in an elaborate leg, (he cannot kiss his hand, and cry, Madam, your humble servant, nor talk idle enough to bear her company). But though a School, and the Hermitage of his Study, has made him uncourtly, yet (which is a finer accomplishment) he is a person of solid Learning; and does not, like some Authors, lose his time by being busy about nothing, nor make so poor a use of the World, as to hug and embrace it.

¹ Lib. 13 de Trinitat. c. 3. The footnote is Fuller's.

² Of the Class of 1669. Sibley (*Harvard Graduates*, ii. 266) cites Dunton's character of Epes.

³ i. 128. Cf. note 2 on p. 252, below.

⁴ The last sentence is from "A Contemplative Man;" the rest is from "A Downright Scholar" (*Microcosmography*, ed. 1811, pp. 61-63, 93).

A few of Dunton's minor figures, who have no names, are also copied from earlier books of characters. Such are the host at Gravesend, the jailer at Boston, and the troublesome landlord at Lynn.¹ The first of these is reprinted below in comparison with the character of "An Host" in the Overbury collection of 1614:

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY
An Host

. . . He consists of double beere and fellowship, . . .

He entertaines humbly, and gives his guests power, as well of himselfe as house. He answers all mens expectations to his power, save in the reckoning: and hath gotten the tricke of greatnesse, to lay all mislikes upon his servants. His wife is the *cummin seed* of his dove-house; and to be a good guest is a warrant for her liberty. . . . In a word, hee is none of his owne: for he neither eats, drinks, or thinks, but at other mens charges and appointments (Overbury's Works, ed. Rimbauld, p. 71).

DUNTON

As soon as we had look'd a little about the Town, we went into an Inn, where we found our Host a man that consisted of Double (Beer)² and fellowship; for as he was sure to supply us with Drink even without asking, so he would always thrust himself in for a snack, in helping to drink it; yet to say the truth, he was a Man of great humility, and gave us power as well over himself as his house. I observ'd him to be exceeding willing to answer all Mens Expectations to the utmost of his Power, unless it were in the Reckoning, and there he would be absolute; and had got that Trick of Court-Greatness, to lay all mistakes upon his Servants. His wife was like Cummin-seed to a Dove-house, and helpt to draw in the Customers; and to be a good Guest, was a sufficient Warrant for her Liberty. And to give you his character in few words, he is an absolute slave, for he neither eats, drinks, nor thinks, but at other mens charges and Appointments. But he sells himself at an Extravagant rate, and makes all his Customers pay dearly for the Purchase. Nor was he at all singular, for in the whole Town, there was never a Barrel better Herring (Letters, pp. 11-12).

It is astonishing to note the plausibility of Dunton's past tenses here and of his assurance that he himself observed the facts.

¹ Letters, pp. 11-12, 120-121, 169-170. The sources are indicated in the table (pp. 247-253, below).

² Whitmore has "Beds." Here, and several times elsewhere, Dunton is so faithful to the original that one can safely emend Whitmore's text.

And now we must look at Comfort Wilkins, Mrs. Green, and the Flower of Boston. There are, to be sure, other women characterized in the Letters: Mrs. D ———, Mrs. T ———, Mrs. F ——— y, and three others,¹ all unfavorably delineated, are copied from earlier books of characters. But the Damsel (Comfort Wilkins), Mrs. Green, and the Widow Brick are far more elaborately portrayed than any of the other characters in the Letters. Not only does Dunton devote more space to summarizing their virtues, but he represents them as playing a considerable part in his stay here. In fact, Mrs. Green used to tell him that if Mrs. Dunton should die, "none was fit to succeed her but Madam Brick." "The Widow Brick was without doubt," says Whitmore,² "Joanna, daughter of Arthur Mason, who married first Robert Breck, and secondly Michael Perry. From Dunton we have the following items for identification: She was a widow, twenty-two years old in 1686, the mother of two children, and a member of Rev. James Allen's church."³ The character certainly fulfills these requirements, and, although Dunton in his manuscript first wrote "Mrs. Birch" and then crossed it out in favor of "Mrs. Brick," I dare say Whitmore is partly right. But it is equally true that Mrs. Brick is the third section of the third part of the "Ladies Calling . . . By the Author of the Whole Duty of Man," &c., which reached a fifth edition in 1677.⁴ I

¹ The three others are Mrs. Ab——l; Doll S——der; and Mrs. ——, who in the *Life and Errors* (i. 110–111) is called Mrs. H. For their sources, see the table, pp. 247–253, below.

² Letters, p. 106 note.

³ The First Church of Boston. Whitmore might have added that Dunton's Madam Brick had been a widow two years (Letters, p. 110). Whether this is true of Mrs. Robert Breck I do not know.

Joanna Mason, the daughter of Arthur and Joanna (Parker) Mason, was born March 26, 1664 (Boston Record Commissioners' Reports, ix. 92). The date of her marriage to Robert Breck seems not to be known. Of her two children, the elder, Joanna, was born June 12, 1681 (ix. 154), and the younger, Robert, on April 30, 1683 (ix. 159). The Widow Brick married Michael Perry on July 12, 1694 (ix. 218).

⁴ The first edition appears to have been printed at Oxford in 1673. The British Museum has a copy of the second edition (Oxford, 1673) and of the third edition (Oxford, 1675). The Harvard Library has a copy of the fifth edition (Oxford, 1677) as well as a folio volume, very well printed "at the Theater in Oxford" in 1684, containing *The Ladies Calling* as the first piece in *The Second Part Of The Works Of the Learned and Pious Author Of The Whole Duty of Man*.

On the much disputed authorship of *The Whole Duty of Man*, see the Intro-

reproduce the entire character with portions of the earlier character beside it.¹

THE LADIES CALLING

1. The next state which can succeed to that of Marriage, is Widow-hood.

She is a woman whose head hath been quite cut off, and yet she liveth.²

. . . *Love is strong as death*, Cant. 8. 6. and therefore when it is pure and genuine, cannot be extinguish'd by it, but burns like the Funeral-Lamps of old even in Vaults and Charnel-houses. The conjugal Love, transplanted into the Grave . . . improves into Piety, and laies a kind of sacred Obligation upon the Widow, to perform all offices of respect and kindness which his remains are capable of.

2. Now those Remains are of three sorts, his Body, his Memory, and his Children. The most proper expression of her love to the first, is in giving it an honorable Enternent; . . . prudently proportion'd to his Quality and Fortune, so that her Zeal to his Corps may not injure a Nobler Relic of him, his Children.

DUNTON

The Character of The Widow Brick, the very Flower of Boston; That of a Widow is the next state or change that can succeed to that of marriage. And I have chosen my Friend the Widow Brick, as an Exemplar to shew you what a Widow is: Madam Brick is a Gentlewoman whose *Head* (i. e. her Husband) has been cut off, and yet she lives and Walks: But don't be frighted, for she's Flesh and Blood still, and perhaps some of the *finest* that you ever saw. She has sufficiently evidenc'd that her Love to her late Husband is as strong as Death, because Death has not been able to Extinguish it, but it still burns like the Funeral Lamps of old, even in Vaults and Charnel-Houses; But her Conjugal Love, being Transplanted into the Grave, has improv'd it self into Piety, and laid an Obligation upon her to perform all offices of Respect and Kindness to his Remains, which they are capable of.

As to his Body, she gave it a decent Enternent, suitable to his quality; or rather above it, as I have been inform'd; for Mr. Brick was Dead and Buried before I came to Boston. And that this was the Effect of that dear love she had for him, appears in this, That she wou'd not suffer the Funeral Charges to make any Abatement from

duction to Pickering's edition of it (1842); Hearne's Remarks and Collections, ed. C. E. Doble, Oxford Historical Society, i. 17, 19, 282, 324; ii. 299; iv. 420; C. E. Doble in the Academy (1882), ii. 348, 364, 382; and the articles in the Dictionary of National Biography on Richard Allestree, Richard Sterne, and John Fell. Mr. Doble thinks that The Whole Duty of Man was written by Sterne and revised by Fell.

¹ It will be observed that Dunton uses, in addition to The Ladies Calling, two short passages from Thomas Fuller's character of "The Good Widow" in The Holy and the Profane State (1642).

² Fuller, "The Good Widow" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, p. 19).

THE LADIES CALLING

DUNTON

Her grief for her husband though real, is moderate, . . . our widow's sorrow is no storm, but a still rain.¹

And this decency is a much better instance of her kindness, then all those Tragical Furies wherewith some Women seem transported towards their dead Husbands, those frantic Embraces and caresses of a Carcass, which betray a little too much the sensuality of their Love. And . . . those vehement Passions quickly exhaust themselves, and . . . seems rather to vanish then consume.

3. The more valuable Kindness therefore, is that to his Memory, endeavouring to embalm that, keep it from perishing. . . .

. . . She is . . . to perfume his Memory . . . by reviving the remembrance of whatever there was praiseworthy in him, vindicating him from all Calumnies and false Accusations, and stifling (or allaying) even true ones as much as she can.

And indeed a Widow can no way better provide for her own Honor, then by this tenderness of her Husbands.

4. Yet there is another Expression of it, inferior to none of the former, and that is the setting such a value upon her relation to him, as to do nothing unworthy of it.

'Twas the dying charge of *Augustus* to his Wife *Livia*, *Behave thy self well, and remember our Marriage*. And she who has bin wife to a Person of Honor,

the Children's Portions. Her grief for his Death was such as became her, great but moderate, not like a hasty Shower, but a still Rain: She knew nothing of those Tragical Furies wherewith some Women seem Transported towards their Dead Husbands; those frantick Embraces and Caresses of a Carcass, betray a little too much the Sensuality of their Love. Such violent Passions quickly spend themselves, and seem rather to Vanish than Consume. But Madam Brick griev'd more moderately, and more lastingly. She knew there was a better way of Expressing her Love to him, and therefore made it her Business to Embalm his Memory, and keep that from Perishing. And I always observ'd, That whenever she spoke of her Husband, it was in the most Endearing manner. Nor cou'd she ever mention him, without paying the Tribute of a Tear to his Memory. She wou'd often be reviving the remembrance of some Praise-worthy Quality or other in him; and if any happen'd to say something of him not so commendable, she wou'd excuse it with a world of Sweetness, and by a frowning glance at the Relator, declare how much she was displeas'd. And tho' I cannot think it her design, yet I believe she was sensible enough that she cou'd no way better provide for her own Honour than by this Tenderness she shew'd for her Husband's. But Madam Brick shew'd a better way of expressing the Honour she had for her Husband's Memory, and that is, She set such a value on her Relation to her Husband, as to do nothing that might seem unworthy of it.

Historians inform us, That 'twas the Dying Charge of Augustus to the Empress Livia, *Behave thy self well, and remember our Marriage*. This

¹ Fuller, "The Good Widow" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, p. 19).

THE LADIES CALLING

must so remember it, as not to do any thing below her self, or which he (could he have foreseen it) should justly have bin ashamed of.

5. The last Tribute she can pay him, is in his Children. These he leaves as his Proxies to receive the kindness of which himself is incapable;

so that the Children of a Widow may clame a double portion of the Mothers love; one upon their Native right, as hers; the other, as a bequest in right of their dead Father.

And, indeed, since she is to supply the place of both Parents, 'tis but necessary she should put on the Affections of both, and to the tenderness of a Mother, add the care and conduct of a Father. First, in a sedulous care of their Education: and next in a prudent managery of their Fortunes; . . .

. . . will furnish them with Ingenious and Vertuous Principles, such as may set them above all vile and ignoble practices.

. . . As to the . . . managing of their Fortune, there is the same rule . . . , viz. to do as for themselves, that is, with the same care and diligence (if not a greater) as in her own Concern. I do not say that she shall confound the property, and make it indeed her own, by applying it to her peculiar use, a thing I fear which is often don, especially by the gaier sort of widows, who to keep up their own Equipage, do sometimes inroach upon their sons peculiar.

10. I have hitherto spoke of what the widow owes to her dead husband;

DUNTON

Madam Brick made her Care; For having been the Wife of a Gentleman of good Quality, she so remember'd it, as not to do any thing below her self, or which Mr. Brick (cou'd he have foreseen it) might justly have been asham'd of. But Madam Brick had yet another way of Expressing the Value she had for Mr. Brick, and that is, by the kindness she show'd to the Children which he left behind him, which were only two: And this was so remarkably Eminent in her, that I have heard her say, Her Children might now claim a double Portion in her love, one on their Native Right, as being Hers; and the other on the Right of their dead Father, who had left them to her: "And truly," said she, "since I must supply the place of both Parents, 'tis but necessary that I shou'd put on the Affections of both; and to the Tenderness of a Mother, add the Care and Conduct of a Father." She was as good as her Word, both in a sedulous care of their Education, and in a Prudent Management of their Fortunes. As to their Education she took care that they might have that Learning that was proper for them, and above all, that they might be furnished with ingenious and vertuous Principles, founded on the Fear of God, which is the beginning of all true Wisdom. And as to their Fortunes, she was so far from Embeziling them, a Practise too common with some Widows, that she augmented them, while it was in the Power of her hand to do it. (For Madam Brick is but a Young Widow, tho' she is the Mother of two Children.)

But Madam Brick is one that has yet more refined and Exalted Thoughts:

THE LADIES CALLING

DUNTON

but there is also somewhat of peculiar Obligation in relation to herself. God who has plac'd us in this World to pursue the interests of a better, directs all the signal acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we should so interpret them . . . and a widow may more then conjecture, that when God takes away the mate of her bosom, reduces her to a solitude, he do's by it sound a retreat from the lighter jollities and gaieties of the world. And as in compliance with civil custom she . . . should put on a more retir'd temper of mind, a more strict and severe behavior:

and that not to be cast off with her veil, but to be the constant dress of her widowhood.

She is highly sensible that God, who has plac'd us in this World to pursue the Interests of a better, directs all the signal Acts of his Providence to that end, and intends we shou'd so interpret them; And therefore she wisely reflected that when God took away from her the Mate of her Bosom, and so reduc'd her to a solitude, he thereby, as it were, Sounded a Retreat to her from the lighter Jollities and Gayeties of the World; and therefore in Compliance to the Divine Will, and that she might the better Answer the Requirement of the Almighty, tho¹ put on a more retired Temper of Mind, and a more strict² . . .

Neither, did she suffer Her Pious behaviour, to be cast off with her Widow's Vail, but made it the constant Dress both of her Widowhood and Life; and as a consequence hereof, she became a Member of Mr. Allen's Congregation; and liv'd a life of Sincere Piety: And yet was so far from Sowness either in her Countenance or Conversation, that nothing was ever more sweet or agreeable: Making it evident that Piety did not consist in Moroseness, nor Sincere Devotion in a supercilious Carriage; 'twas the *Vitals* of Religion that she minded, and not Forms and Modes; and if she found the Power of it in her heart, she did not think her self oblig'd to such a *starch'dness* of Carriage as is usual amongst the Bostonians, who value themselves thereby so much, that they are ready to say to all others, Stand off, for I am holier than thou. She did not think herself concern'd to put on a Sorrowful Countenance, when the Joy of the Lord was her strength.

¹ So Whitmore, and so Chester MS, Letter iii, p. 48. One would expect "she," as in *The Ladies Calling*.

² Whitmore notes: "Here the manuscript is imperfect."

THE LADIES CALLING

DUNTON

There are many things which are but the due compliances of a Wife, which yet are great avocations, and interruptions of a strict Devotion; when she is manumitted from that subjection, when she has less of *Martha's Care of serving*, she is then at liberty to chuse *Mary's part*. Luk. 10. 42.

. . . Those hours which were before her husbands right, seem now to devolve on God the grand proprietor of our time: that discourse and free converse wherewith she entertain'd him, she may now convert into colloquies and spiritual intercourse with her maker.

I had much the greater value for Madam Brick, on the Account of a Discourse that past between Mrs. Green and her, which (as Mrs. Green related it to me) was to this effect: Mrs. Green commended her very much, in that being a Young Widow, in the bloom of all her Youth and Beauty, (for she was but twenty-two) she had given up so much of her time to the Exercise of Devotion, and the Worship of God; To which she reply'd, 'She had done but what she ought; for in her Married state she found many things which yet are but the due Compliances of a Wife, which were great Avocations to a Strict Devotion; but being now manumitted from that Subjection, and having less of Martha's Care of Serving, it was but reasonable she shou'd chuse Mary's better part.' "And those hours (added she) which were before my Husband's Right, are now devolv'd on God, the Great Proprietor of all my time: And that Discourse and free Converse with which I us'd to entertain Mr. Brick, ought now to be in Colloquies and heavenly Entercourses with My dear Redeemer." Nor was her Piety and Devotion barren, but fruitful and abounding in the Works of *Charity*, and she cloath'd the Naked as far as her Ability permitted. And tho' my self and Mr. King went thither often (for she wou'd scarce permit a single visit) we never found her without some poor but honest Christian with her, always discoursing of the things of Heaven, and ere she went, supplying of her with the things of Earth. How long she may remain a Widow, I have not yet consulted with the Stars to know, but that she has continu'd so two years, is evident to all that are in Boston.

To conclude her Character, the *Beauty* of her Person, the *Sweetness* and *Affability* of her Temper, the *Gravity*

DUNTON

of her Carriage, and her Exalted Piety, gave me so just a value for her, that Mrs. Green wou'd often say, Shou'd Iris Dye (which Heaven forbid) there's none was fit to succeed her but Madam Brick: But Mrs. Green was partial, for my poor Pretences to secure vertue, wou'd ne'er have answer'd to her Towering heighths. 'Tis true, Madam Brick did me the Honour to treat me very kindly at her House, and to admit me often into her Conversation, but I am sure it was not on Love's, but on Vertue's score. For she well knows (at least as well as I do) that Iris is alive: And therefore I must justify her Innocence on that account. And tho' some have been pleas'd to say, That were I in a single state, they do believe she wou'd not be displeas'd with my Addresses, As this is without any ground but groundless Conjectures, so I hope I shall never be in a capacity to make a Tryal of it.

But, I'm sure our Friendship was all Platonick (so Angels lov'd) and full as Innocent as that of the Philosopher who gave it the name; but if Plato was not very much wrong'd he never lov'd vertue so refinedly, as to like to court her so passionately in a foul or homely habitation as he did in those that were more Beautiful and Lovely; and this sufficiently justifies my Friendship to Madam Brick and her Spotless Innocence in accepting of it. Thus, Reader, I have given you the Character of another of my Friends of the Fair Sex in Boston; and leave you to judge whether or no she deserve the Title of *the Flower of Boston*, which at first sight I gave her (Letters, pp. 105-111).

So much for the Widow Brick, the Flower of Boston. And Comfort Wilkins and Mrs. Green are drawn from the same source — The Ladies Calling. Even the remarks which they are represented as

actually having made to John Dunton or in his presence are taken almost verbatim from those earlier characters of the abstract Virgin, Wife, and Widow, as conceived by an English clergyman thirteen years before John Dunton came to Boston.

For convenience I have arranged in a table such borrowings in Dunton's Letters as have been traced to their source. The letter W indicates that Dunton's indebtedness was detected by Whitmore.

| DUNTON'S SOURCE | DUNTON |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <i>First Letter</i> |
| Overbury's "Fair and Happy Milkmaid" (Works, ed. Rimbault, pp. 118-119). | Description of a Milkmaid (omitted by Whitmore; ¹ see Letters, p. 11). |
| Overbury's "Host" (Works, p. 71). | The Host and his Wife (pp. 11-12). |
| Overbury's ² "Almanac-maker" (Works, pp. 92-93). | An Astrologer (pp. 17-18). |
| Overbury's "A Maquerda, in plain English a Bawde" (Works, pp. 99-100). | A Bawd. ³ |
| Overbury's "A Whoore" (Works, pp. 82-83). | An Impudent Whore. ³ |
| Overbury's "A very Whore" (Works, pp. 83-84). | Another. ³ |
| | <i>Second Letter</i> |
| Overbury, "A Saylor" (Works, pp. 75-76). | George Monk, the Mate (p. 26). |
| Overbury, "A Saylor" (Works, pp. 75-76). | Charles King, the Gunner (p. 26). |
| Josselyn, p. 8. ⁴ | St. Elmo's Fire (p. 31). |

¹ But to be found on p. 8 of Chester MS, Letter i.

² This character originally appeared in the sixth edition (1615) of the Overbury collection, and is regularly spoken of, in a loose way, as Overbury's. But in the second edition (1615) of John Stephens's *New Essayes and Characters*, a person who signs himself I. Cocke claims as his own three of the Overbury characters, of which one is the Almanac-maker. There is a copy of Stephens's book in the Harvard University Library.

³ Omitted by Whitmore. Chester MS, Letter i, pp. 23-24.

⁴ John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New England*, Made during the years 1638, 1663, Boston, William Veazie, 1865.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

DUNTON

Third Letter

Partly from Overbury's "A Wise Man,"
and partly from Overbury's "A
Noble Spirit" (Works, pp. 60-62).

Josselyn, pp. 124-126.

Josselyn, p. 139.

J. W., A Letter from New England,
1682, p. 2.¹

Josselyn, p. 138.

Josselyn, p. 139.

Josselyn, pp. 137-138.

Josselyn, pp. 134-137.

Partly from Josselyn, p. 137.²

J. W., A Letter from New England.

Probably from Josselyn, p. 39, third
paragraph, though not verbatim.

Fuller, "The Good Merchant" (Holy
and Profane State, ed. 1840, pp.
88-91).

Earle, "A Modest Man" (Microcos-
mography, ed. 1811, pp. 147-150).

Fuller, "The Good Merchant."

Mr. Burroughs, a Merchant (pp. 59-
62).

Description of Boston (pp. 66-69). W.
"There is no trading for a Sharper with
them," etc., to end of the sentence
(p. 69).

"As to their religion" (p. 69), etc., to
the end of the paragraph. W.

"The Government, both Civil and
Ecclesiastical," etc., to the end of
the sentence (p. 70).

Account of the collection taken in
church after the Sunday afternoon
sermon (pp. 70-71).

"Every church (for so they call)," etc.,
to the end of the following sentence
(p. 71).

"As to their laws," and the rest of the
paragraph (p. 71). W.

"For being drunk" (p. 72), etc.,
through "and so our poor debtors"
(p. 73, l. 7). W.

"But for lying and cheating" (p. 73)
through "fasten his Tallons first
upon 'em" (p. 74). W.

"And thus, my friend," etc., to the
end of the paragraph (p. 74).

Mr. Willy (p. 81).

Mr. Mortimer (p. 86).

Mr. Heath, a good merchant (pp. 88-
89).

¹ Letter / From / New-England / Concerning their Customs, Manners, /
And / Religion. / . . . / London. / Printed for Randolph Taylor near Sta-
tioners Hall, 1682. Reprinted in facsimile by the Club for Colonial Reprints of
Providence, Rhode Island, Providence, 1905. Edited by George Parker Winship.

² Dunton copies Josselyn's statements of the punishments; i. e., p. 72, first
paragraph as far as the colon; all of the second paragraph; the first sentence in
the third; as far as the semicolon in the fourth; all of the last; the first sentence
in the first paragraph on p. 73; the first sentence in the second paragraph on
p. 73.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

DUNTON

- Overbury, "A Mere Pettifogger" (Works, pp. 129-131). Mr. Watson, a Lawyer (pp. 89-90).
- Contains one sentence from Richard Flecknoe's character "Of an extream Vicious Person." ² Mr. C——¹ (p. 90).
- Fuller, "The Good Physician" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, p. 42). Dr. Oaks (p. 93).
- Partly from Fuller's "The True Gentleman," partly from his "Good Physician" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, pp. 120-122, 43). Dr. Bullivant (pp. 94-96).
- The Ladies Calling, part ii. Sect. 1. Comfort Wilkins, a Virgin (pp. 98-102).
- The Ladies Calling, ii. Sect. 2. Mrs. Green, the Wife (pp. 102-105).
- The Ladies Calling, ii. Sect. 3. The character of Mrs. Brick also contains two sentences from Fuller's "the Good Widow" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, p. 19). Madam Brick, the Widow (pp. 106-111).
- Fuller's "The Harlot" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, pp. 287-290). Mrs. Ab——l (pp. 112-113).
- Flecknoe, "Of an inconstant disposition" (ed. 1673, p. 17). Doll S——der (p. 115).
- Flecknoe, "Of a Proud One" (Fifty-five Enigmatical Characters, 1665.⁴ The character "Of a Proud One," which is not mentioned in the table of contents, stands between Nos. 31 and 32). This character also contains one sentence ("Had she been with the Israelites," etc.) from Fuller's essay "Of Apparel" (Holy and Profane State, ed. 1840, p. 133). Mrs. ——³ (pp. 115-116).

Third Letter (continued) ⁵

- Earle, "A Prison" (Microcosmography, 1811, pp. 156-158). The Prison, in Prison Lane (pp. 118-119).
- Overbury, "A Jailer" (Works, ed. Rimbault, pp. 166-168). The Jailer (pp. 120-121).

¹ Omitted by Whitmore. Chester MS, Letter iii, pp. 28-29.

² A / Collection / Of the choicest / Epigrams / And / Characters / of / Richard Flecknoe. / Being rather a New Work, / then a New Impression / of the Old. / Printed for the Author 1673, p. 34. There is a copy in the Harvard University Library.

³ In the Life and Errors (pp. 110-111) she is called Mrs. H——.

⁴ Bodleian Library. Wood 868. (5.)

⁵ Whitmore divides the third letter into two parts.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

DUNTON

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cotton Mather, <i>The Call of the Gospel Applied, etc.</i> , Second edition, 1687 (Sibley No. 5). ² | Cotton Mather on the execution of Morgan (pp. 122-124). ¹ W. |
| Joshua Moody, <i>An Exhortation to a Condemned Malefactor, etc.</i> , 1687. ² | Joshua Moody on the same ¹ (pp. 125-129). W. |
| Increase Mather, <i>A Sermon, Occasioned by the Execution, etc.</i> , Second Edition, 1687. ² | Increase Mather on the same ¹ (pp. 129-135). W. |
| Increase Mather, <i>A Sermon occasioned by the Execution, etc.</i> , pp. 35-36. ² | Morgan's last words (pp. 135-136). W. |

Fourth Letter

Josselyn, p. 126.

First Ramble (To Charlestown).
Description of Charlestown (pp. 149-150).Roger Williams, *Key*, pp. 100-105.³

Indian Hospitality (pp. 151-153). W.

¹ These borrowings are, of course, acknowledged by Dunton.² A Sermon / Occasioned by the Execution of / a man found Guilty of / Murder / Preached at Boston in N. E. March 11th 168 $\frac{3}{4}$ / Together with the Confession, Last Expressions, / & solemn Warning of that Murderer to all persons; especially to Young men, to beware of those / Sins which brought him to his miserable End. / By Increase Mather, Teacher of / Church of Christ. / The Second Edition. / [Texts: Deut. 19. 20, 21; Prov. 28. 17] / Boston, Printed by R. P. Sold by J. Brunning / Book-seller, at his Shop at the Corner of the / Prison-Lane next the Exchange. Anno 1687.

This seems to serve as the general title for the volume; at least, the copy in the Harvard Library, which is paged continuously, has no other title at the beginning. Increase Mather's sermon occupies pp. 1-36. Then comes "The / Call of the Gospel / Applied / Unto All men in general, and / Unto a Condemned Malefactor in particular. / In a Sermon, Preached on the 7th / Day of March. 1686. / At the Request, and in the Hearing of a man under / a just Sentence of Death for the horrid Sin of / Murder. / By Cotton Mather. / Pastor to a Church at Boston in N. E. / The Second Edition. / [Text] / [Motto] / Printed at Boston, by Richard Pierce. 1687." Cotton Mather's sermon occupies pp. 37-82, and is followed by "An / Exhortation / To A Condemned / Malefactor / Delivered March the 7th 1686. / By Joshua Moody, Preacher of / the Gospel at Boston in New-England. / [Texts] / Printed at Boston, by R. P. Anno 1687." Moody's sermon occupies pp. 83-113. Then follows (p. 114) an address from "The Printer to the Reader," which is signed "R. P." Then comes (pp. 115-124) "The Discourse of the Minister with / James Morgan on the Way to his Execution."

³ A Key into the Language of America: Or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England. Together, with briefe Observations of the Customes, Manners and Worships, etc. of the aforesaid Natives, . . . By Roger Williams . . . London, . . . 1643. (Reprinted by the Narragansett Club, Fifth Series, Volume i. Providence, 1866). My references, like Whitmore's, are to the numbering of the volume, which contains other tracts besides the Key.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 107-108.

Josselyn, p. 127.

Josselyn, p. 128.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 120-128,
132-135.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 158-162.

Josselyn, p. 128.

Earle, "A bold, forward Man" (Micro-
cosmography, ed. 1811, pp. 122-125).

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 207-220.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 233-237.

Josselyn, pp. 122-123.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 248-252.

Josselyn, p. 123.

Roger Williams, Key, p. 167.

Josselyn, p. 123.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 196-202.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 187-190.

Josselyn, pp. 123-124.

Josselyn, p. 124.

Cotton Mather, Life of Eliot (ed. 1691,
portions of pp. 6-73; ed. 1694, pp.
6-78; Magnalia, ed. 1702, bk. iii.
pp. 173-190).

Cotton Mather, Life of Eliot (ed. 1691,
pp. 74 ff; ed. 1694, pp. 78 ff; Mag-
nalia, ed. 1702, bk. iii. pp. 190 ff).

DUNTON

Second Ramble (To Medford).
Indian Hospitality, continued (p. 155). W.

Third Ramble (To New-Town).
Description of New Town (pp. 155-156).

Fourth Ramble (To Winnisimmet).
Description of the Town (pp. 163, 167).
Indian Houses (pp. 163-167). W.

Fifth Ramble (To Lynn).
Indian Travelling (pp. 168-169). W.
Description of Lynn (p. 169).
The Troublesome Host (pp. 169-170).

Indian Religion (pp. 171-176). W.

Sixth Ramble (To Nantascot).
Indian Money (pp. 177-179). W.
Description of Nantascot (including
the paragraph beginning, "Being
come to Nantascot," and also the
next paragraph).

Seventh Ramble (To Wissagusset).
Indian Hunting (pp. 181-182). W.
Description of the Town (p. 183).

Eighth Ramble (To Braintree).
Climate of New England (pp. 184-185).
W.
Description of Braintree (p. 185).

Ninth Ramble (To Dorchester).
Fish of New England (pp. 186-189). W.
Beasts of New England (pp. 189-190). W.
Description of Dorchester (pp. 190-
191).

Tenth Ramble (To Roxbury).
Description of Roxbury (p. 192).
Life and Character of Eliot (pp. 194-
199). W.

Conversion of the Indians (pp. 200-
202). W.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

DUNTON

Fifth Letter

Cotton Mather, *Life of Eliot* (ed. 1691, pp. 88 ff; ed. 1694, pp. 94 ff; *Magnalia*, ed. 1702, bk. iii. p. 194).

Josselyn, p. 127.

Josselyn, pp. 37-38.

Cotton Mather, *Magnalia*, ed. 1702, bk. vi. p. 51.

Roger Williams, *Key*, pp. 163-166.

Cotton Mather, *Life of Eliot* (ed. 1691, pp. 80 ff; ed. 1694, pp. 85 ff; *Magnalia*, ed. 1702, bk. iii. pp. 192 ff).

Roger Williams, *Key*, pp. 203-205.

Cotton Mather, *Life of Eliot* (ed. 1691, pp. 100 ff, 104-108, 89-92; ed. 1694, pp. 106 ff, 111-116, 95-99; *Magnalia*, ed. 1702, bk. iii. pp. 197 ff, 198-199, 194).

John Eliot, *The Dying Speeches of Several Indians*.¹

Eliot's *Labors among the Indians* (pp. 211-212).

Description of Watertown (pp. 214-215).

Brief description (about 12 lines) of the country through which he rode to Watertown (p. 216).

The Indian Government (pp. 218-220, l. 8).

Authority of the Prince's Punishments (p. 220, two paragraphs).

Of the conversion of the Indians (pp. 221-224). W.

Indian Clothing (pp. 224-225). W.

The Converted Indians of Natick (pp. 225-233). W.

Dying Speeches of Indians (pp. 233-241). W.

Sixth Letter

Josselyn, p. 132.

Overbury, "A Reverend Judge" (Works, ed. Rimbault, pp. 136-137).

Settlement of Salem² (pp. 252-253).

Mr. Sewel (p. 254)

¹ Through the kindness of Professor W. W. Lawrence of Columbia University, Mr. Will T. Hale transcribed for me from the copy of the original edition in the New York Public Library the portions of Eliot's book here used by Dunton. The text of Eliot is copied almost verbatim.

On the date of the original, Sabin (No. 22148) remarks: "The date of 1665 which has been assigned to it, is doubtless incorrect, as on page 25 following Eliot speaks of John Speen and Anthony as living in 1670, whose 'Dying Speeches' are given in the tract named."

² From his account in the Letters of the visit to Salem, Dunton omits a character of Mr. Daniel Epes (*Life and Errors*, p. 128), which is taken from Earle's "A Down-right Scholar" (*Microcosmography*, 1811, pp. 61-64). Whitmore (p. 256 note) notices the omission, quotes the character of Mr. Epes and the two following paragraphs from the *Life and Errors*, and observes that they "doubtless should be in the text" of the Letters at this point. But he strangely fails to remember that the third of these paragraphs, very slightly modified to make it fit Boston instead of Salem, *had* been incorporated in the Letters and is to be found on pp. 62-63 of his own edition.

DUNTON'S SOURCE

DUNTON

Earle, "A Grave Divine" (Microcosmography, ed. 1811, pp. 9-11).

Mr. Higgins(on) (pp. 254-255).

Seventh Letter

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 228-231.

Marriage Customs of Indians (pp. 267-269). W.

Josselyn, pp. 129-130.

Description of Wenham and the surrounding country (pp. 271-272).

Roger Williams, Key, p. 180.

Indian Husbandry (pp. 272-275). W.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 246-247, 239-245.

Indian Trade and Money (pp. 277-279). W.

Josselyn, p. 129.

Description of Ipswich (p. 280).

Overbury, "A Good Wife" (Works, ed. Rimbault, pp. 72-73).

Mrs. Steward (p. 281).

Overbury, "A Noble and Retired Housekeeper" (Works, pp. 115-116).

Mr. Steward (pp. 281-282).

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 285-264.

Indian Warfare (pp. 272-275). W.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 254-257.

Indian Games and Sports (pp. 286-288). W.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 142-147.

Indians and News (pp. 292-293). W.

Roger Williams, Key, pp. 274-277.

Indian Mourning and Burial (pp. 294-295). W.

From this list it appears that there are at least eighty-four cases in which Dunton incorporated borrowed material in the Letters. Of these Whitmore noted thirty-three: eighteen from Roger Williams, six from Cotton Mather, three from Josselyn, two from Increase Mather, two from J. W., one from John Eliot, and one from Joshua Moody. To these we have added fifty-one passages, — twenty from Josselyn and thirty-one from various writers of characters; namely, fourteen from Overbury, seven from Fuller, four from Earle, three from Flecknoe, and three from the author of *The Ladies Calling*.

It may be suggested — indeed it has been suggested¹ — that "had this volume been issued in Dunton's life-time, he might have confessed his indebtedness." For two reasons this seems unlikely.

First, it is unlikely because of the principle which, seen in its extreme form, makes a novelist avoid footnotes. Dunton, to be sure, was not a novelist; he was not even able to achieve such approaches to the novel as were made by Addison and Defoe. Yet it seems clear that when an author, in copying such material as that which Dunton takes from Roger Williams, uses such pains as his to make the ideas appear

¹ By Whitmore, in his Introduction, p. xxiii.

either to be original or to have been communicated to him by persons with whom he spoke in the course of his rambles, he is manifestly trying¹ to write a kind of work in which acknowledgments of indebtedness would be out of place.

A second and more tangible objection is that to make such acknowledgments appears not to have been Dunton's custom. For in at least two works that were published in his lifetime — the *Life and Errors* (1705) and *Athenianism* (1710) — Dunton borrows freely and without acknowledgment.

In the first part of his *Athenianism* (1710) Dunton prints as his own four poems² which had appeared in 1685 in Samuel Wesley's *Maggots*,³ of which Dunton had written in 1705: "I once printed a Book, I remember, under the title of 'Maggots'; but it was written by a *Dignitary* in the Church of England."⁴

In his *Life and Errors* (1705) Dunton prints, without acknowledgment, not only many of the characters that appear in his *Letters*, but many others as well. Comfort Wilkins, Mrs. Green, the Widow Brick, Mr. Heath, Dr. Oakes, Dr. Bullivant, and Dunton's other Boston friends appear there, sometimes more briefly sketched than in the *Letters*, but still replete with phrases taken from earlier books of characters. And in addition there are a great many characters of Dunton's English acquaintances — printers, publishers, hack-writers, and so on — in which he borrows at least a phrase or two from such writers as Hall and Earle. The character of Major Hatley, placed

¹ Whether Dunton did this out of self-esteem and the desire to steal a reputation, or with the wish to soften formal exposition into something more entertaining, does not for the moment concern us. Probably his motives were mixed.

² "A King turn'd Thresher. By Mr. Dunton" (*Athenianism*, pp. 213-215; *Maggots*, pp. 94-96); "A Covetous old Fellow having taken Occasion to hang himself a little; another comes in, in the Nick, and cuts him down; but instead of thanking him for his Life, he accuses him for spoiling the Rope. — By Mr. Dunton" (*Athenianism*, p. 215; *Maggots*, pp. 68-70); "On the Bear-fac'd Lady. By Mr. Dunton" (*Athenianism*, pp. 218-220; *Maggots*, pp. 29-31); "The Innocent Fraud; Or, the Lyar in Mode and Figure. By Mr. Dunton" (*Athenianism*, pp. 221-222; *Maggots*, pp. 62-63).

³ *Maggots*: / Or, / Poems / On / Several / Subjects, / Never before Handled. / By a Schollar. / London, / Printed for John Dunton, at the Sign / of the Black Raven, at the Corner of Princes / Street, near the Royal Exchange. 1685.

There is a copy in the Harvard University Library.

⁴ *Life and Errors*, i. 187.

beside one of Hall's types, will give a fair idea of the extent of the borrowing in the more fully developed portraits.¹

JOSEPH HALL

The Valiant Man (1608)

He is the master of himself, and subdues his passions to reason, and by this inward victory works his own peace.

. . . He lies ever close within himself, armed with wise resolution, and will not be discovered but by death or danger.

. . . and he holds it the noblest revenge, that he might hurt and doth not (Hall's Works, Oxford, 1837, vi. 94).

DUNTON

Major Hatley

He is the master of himself, and subdues his passions to reason; and by this inward victory, works his own peace. He is well skilled in Military Discipline; and, from being a Captain, is advanced to a Major. He lies ever close within himself, armed with wise resolution, and will not be discovered but by Death or Danger. "Piety never looks so bright as when it shines in Steel;" and Major Hatley holds it the noblest revenge that he *might hurt*, and *does not*. I dealt with this Military Stationer for six years, but left him, with flying colours, to trade with his honest Servant (Life and Errors, i. 255).

Where does all this leave us? How does the discovery of these borrowings affect our knowledge of the persons characterized and our estimate of Dunton's Letters from New England?

It seems to me that Dunton's characters may be made to fall into three groups. First come a number of portraits in the course of which Dunton used a phrase or a sentence from some earlier writer of characters. Probably the phrase fitted as well as any original phrase would have fitted. If so the validity of the portrait is not affected. Next come those instances in which fairly well-known

¹ Among the earlier characters drawn on are Earle's "Grave Divine," which furnishes parts of the sketches of Mr. Spademan (pp. 140-141), Mr. Lobb (p. 175), Mr. Trail (p. 176); Earle's "Modest Man," which becomes Mr. Cleave (p. 228) and also furnishes a part of Mr. Samuel Hool (p. 255); and Earle's "Staid Man," parts of which go to make up Mr. Grantham (p. 246), Mr. Darby (p. 247), and Mr. Littlebury (p. 256). Bishop Hall's characters are also used: his "Humble Man" for parts of Mr. Merreal (p. 254) and Mr. Sheafe (p. 254), and his "Truly-Noble" man in Mr. Proctor (pp. 255-256) and in parts of Mr. Merreal (p. 254), Mr. Sheafe (p. 254), and Mr. Samuel Hool (p. 255). S. Malthus (p. 459), who published Dunton's Life and Errors, could hardly have been pleased to find on reading it that she was thought to combine the faults of Earle's "Detractor" and his "She Precise Hypocrite."

persons like Mr. Epes, Dr. Bullivant, Mr. Heath, and others, are characterized almost wholly in the words of earlier writers. In these cases it is unsafe to apply the details of the portrait: we can be sure merely that the character was — or that Dunton thought him — a worthy merchant, a skilled physician, or whatever else; that is, we can apply the title, not the details. Finally come persons who are wholly characterized in the words of earlier writers, and of whom nothing is known except what Dunton tells us. Here it would seem that, in the words of Sir John Seeley, "history fades into mere literature."

Historically considered, Dunton's Letters from New England have suffered a good deal in the course of this examination. Indeed, an historian might almost say that they are not letters, that they are not from New England, and that they are not by John Dunton. But I wish to suggest, in conclusion, that the trouble is not that the book is a bad one, but that it has been wrongly catalogued. If we take it off the American History shelves — where it never belonged — and put it with English Fiction, we shall find, I think, that precisely those portions of it which were before the most absurd and deceptive are now the most significant.

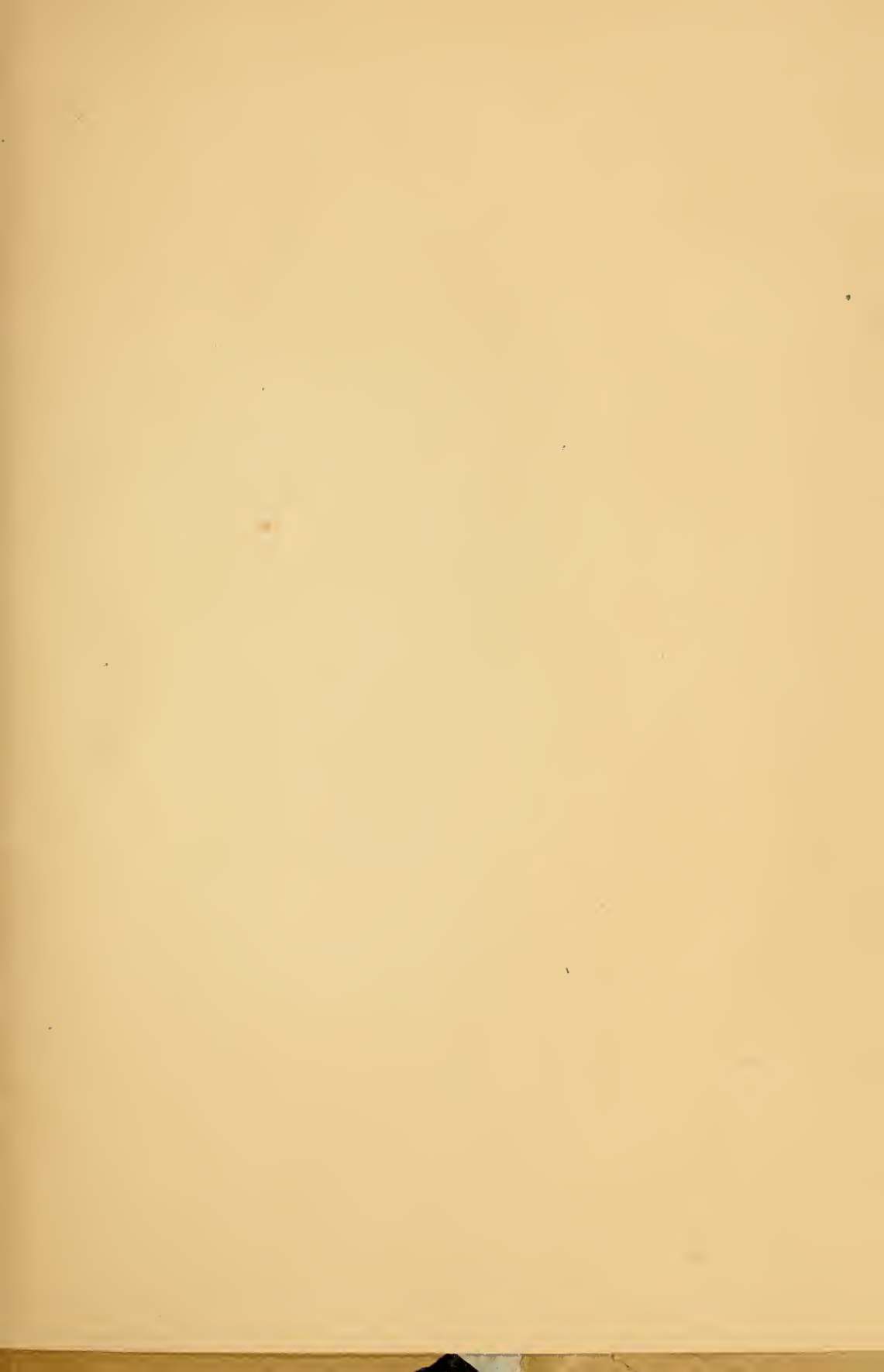
Few phases of the transition in English literature from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century are more important or more difficult to trace than the beginnings of English prose fiction. These beginnings have to be sought in a great variety of documents, including fictitious voyages, histories, and letters, imaginary adventures of animals, allegories, visions, and many other devices, which, although they often contain fact, do not aim to be true.¹ Another matter vital to the transition is the development from the abstract character to the novel of character. It is well known that Addison and Steele, in the *Tatler*

¹ See E. C. Baldwin, *Character Books of the Seventeenth Century in Relation to the Development of the Novel*, *Western Reserve Bulletin*, October, 1900; H. S. Canby, *The Short Story in English*, New York, 1909, especially Chapters viii and ix; F. W. Chandler, *The Literature of Roguery*, Boston and New York, 1907, especially Chapter vii; Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1908, especially Chapter iv; W. L. Cross, *The Development of the English Novel*, New York, 1899; Rudolf Furst, *Die Vorläufer der Modernen Novelle im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, Halle, 1897; Charlotte Morgan, *The Rise of the Novel of Manners*, New York, 1911 (good bibliography); Sir Walter Raleigh, *The English Novel*, New York, 1904.

and the Spectator, mark a half-way point in several phases of this transition. They used fictitious letters and diaries, and in particular they made great progress in modifying the old abstract character, which they felt to be stiff, vague, and repellently didactic. Accordingly, they gave their characters names, they made them speak, they even, by becoming Mr. Nestor Ironsides or Mr. Spectator, walked right into the page themselves and spoke with their characters. They supplied descriptive backgrounds, and indeed almost everything that a novel requires, except the plot. Consequently we say truly that they greatly improved the technique of characterization in prose fiction.

Did not John Dunton, very imperfectly and probably with motives very much mixed, do many of these things? He took abstract characters, named them, made them speak, spoke with them, went on picnics with them, and, in the case of Madam Brick, almost fell in love with one of them. His mistake was not in introducing so much fiction, but rather in not casting entirely loose from fact. Our mistake has been in keeping him on our shelves beside Sewall and Josse-lyn, instead of beside Ned Ward and Daniel Defoe.







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